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THE LANGUAGE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT AS  
THAT OF THE COMMON PEOPLE.



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THAT OF THE COMMON PEOPLE

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ABBREVIATIONS.

L.F.-----Deissmann, Adolf, Light From The  
Ancient East. 1927.

V.V.-----Hilligan, George, and Moulton, James  
Lope, Vocabulary of the Greek Testament,  
The, Parts I-VIII. 1914-29.

P. Oxy-----Grenfell, B. P., and Hunt, A. S.,  
Oxyrhynchus Papyri, The, Parts I-XVI.  
1898-1924.





# THE LANGUAGE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT AS THAT OF THE COMMON PEOPLE.

## INTRODUCTION.

What is meant by "the language of the common people?" When we say that the language of the New Testament, is the language of the common people, do we mean that it is a speech which is vulgar, incapable of beauty, and choosing in preference prosy and commonplace expressions? If one feels that these are necessary characteristics of the common people's language, he will no doubt be ready to insist that there is no way by which we may prove that the lofty thought of many of the passages of the New Testament, is couched in that language. However, as Cobern says, "The people's language, when it is the voice of the heart, the undisguised utterance of deep feeling, can attain remarkable beauty."<sup>1</sup> This is the truth concerning the language of the New Testament.

In this paper, the language of the common people is distinguished from the language of the classics. It is the language of the street, the market place, and the home. It is the language of the fishermen as they toil in their boats, or the shepherds as they watch their flocks, of the soldiers who converse together around the campfire at the end of the day's march, and of the travelers while

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1. Cobern, The New Archeological Discoveries, p.xx.



they journey. It is the language which men use when speaking as from friend to friend, and which is therefore natural and spontaneous. It can be understood and appreciated by those whose taste for the classics has never been developed, and it has the ability to discover and touch the hidden springs of the heart. In such a language the New Testament was written.

The religion of Jesus Christ was one which would especially make a strong appeal to the middle and lower classes. This was true of the content of the message, as well as of the form in which the message came to them. The many slaves who heard his message were told how they might be free in spirit. Those who were weary from the struggle to keep soul and body together, were invited to come and find rest for their souls. Those who were despondent over their lot in life were assured that a benevolent heavenly Father had not forgotten them. And those who had nothing in the way of this world's goods, were assured that it was hard for those who have riches to inherit the kingdom of heaven, while the meek shall inherit the earth. So we see the rich going away with sorrow<sup>1</sup> while the common people heard him gladly.<sup>2</sup> We are assured by Paul that "not many mighty, not many noble are called."<sup>3</sup> All of which prepares us to

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1.Mt.19:22; Mk.10:22.

2.Mk.12:37.

3.L Cor.1:26.





discover that the form in which this message came to the people was of a popular character also.

Jesus grew up among the poor people, learning from experience their problems, their customs, their likes and their dislikes, their virtues and their vices, their hopes and their fears. He was a close observer, both of men and of nature, and when we study his discourses, we find them reflecting all of this. The sayings of Jesus are simple, clear, and concise, given in what might often be called a child's language. This is especially reflected in his parables. They all deal with things which were common knowledge and experience to his hearers. The housewife sweeping her house to find the lost coin; the sower sowing his seed; the net gathering all kinds of fish; the good shepherd searching for the lost sheep--what could be more simple, and more likely to appeal to the "common people" than this?

If the teachings of Jesus are of a popular character, so also are the other portions of the New Testament popular in form. Take, for example, what are generally called the "epistles" of St. Paul. Deissmann has gone to great pains to demonstrate the fact that the letters of St. Paul are in fact, not Epistles at all, in

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the proper sense of the word, but that they are non-literary letters. "What is a letter? A letter is something non-literary, a means of communication between persons who are separated from each other. Confidential and personal in its nature, it is intended only for the person or persons to whom it is addressed, and not at all for the public or any kind of publicity.....What is an epistle? An epistle is an artistic literary form, a species of literature, just like the dialogue, the oration, or the drama. It has nothing in common with the letter except its form; apart from that one might venture the paradox that the epistle is the opposite of a real letter. The contents of an epistle are intended for publicity--they aim at interesting "the public." If the letter is a secret, the epistle is cried in the market; everyone may read it, and is expected to read it: the more readers it obtains, the better its purpose will be fulfilled.....

"The letters of Paul are not literary; they are real letters, not epistles; they were written by Paul not for the public and posterity, but for the persons to whom they are addressed. Almost all the mistakes that have ever been made in the study of St. Paul's life and work have arisen from the neglect of the fact that his writings are non-literary and letter-like in character<sup>1</sup>."

While Deissmann admits that there are also literary epistles in the New Testament<sup>2</sup>, even these have

1. Deissmann, *Light From the Ancient East* (1927), Page 228ff.  
 2. op cit. Page 242. Epistles of James, Peter, Jude and Hebrews. He is also inclined to include the Apocalypse in this list. I John is neither letter nor epistle, but a diatribe.



sufficient popular elements to warrant the statement that the New Testament is in form a book of the common people. "The earliest Christian literature is of a popular kind, not artistic literature for the cultured. It either creates a simple form for itself (the gospel), or it employs the most artless forms assumed by Jewish or pagan prose (the chronicle, apocalypse, epistle, "diatribe"). The popular features exhibited are of two kinds..... we have on the one hand the influence of the country and provincial towns, on the other hand that of the great towns predominating.<sup>1</sup>"

One might go on indefinitely, pointing out the various features which indicate the popular form in which Christianity came to the people. But since this paper is concerned more with the language of the New Testament than with the style in which it is written, one other reference will suffice here. That is, to the figures of speech, particularly to those of Paul. In the past, some of these have been recognized as figures of speech, but the full significance of many of them has only been brought to light since the recognition of the importance of the non-literary memorials<sup>2</sup> has led to a fuller understanding of the popular customs of that period. Now we know that the writings of Paul, and to a lesser extent, of the others, abound in allusions to religious, legal, and business customs of the

1. Weissmann, *Light from the Ancient* (1912), p. 248.

2. The importance of the non-literary memorials will be set forth in Sec. I.





times, and we also know that some of the figures of speech which seemed very difficult to understand, would be readily understood by the people to whom Paul was writing.

"One of the marks of the highly popular style of St. Paul's missionary methods is that in many passages of his letters we find St. Paul employing a usage particularly familiar and intelligible to popular feeling--<sup>1</sup> mean the technical phraseology and the cadence of the language of magic.<sup>1</sup>" Deissmann has shown that the curious sentence about "the marks of Jesus"<sup>2</sup> is best understood if read in the light of a magical formula handed down in a Leyden papyrus.<sup>3</sup> And in the concluding lines of I Corinthians there is a reminiscence of the cadence of ancient curses imitated from the language of legislation: "But if anyone loveth not the Lord, let him be anathema."<sup>4</sup> Deissmann tells us<sup>5</sup> that there is a pagan inscription from Halicarnassus, of the second or third century A.D., now in the British Museum, which reads, "But if anyone shall attempt to take away a stone....let him be accursed." While the word translated "accursed" is not the same in the originals of the two passages, still the similarity is sufficient to lead one to suppose that Paul was familiar with the latter formula.

It has been known for a long time that Paul was

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1. Deissmann, op.cit., P. 301.

2. I Cor. 16:17.

3. Deissmann, op.cit., P. 301.

4. I Cor. 16:22.

5. Deissmann, op.cit., P. 301.



influenced by legal ideas, but we are enlightened particularly in regard to his metaphor of our redemption by Christ from the slavery of sin, the law, idols, men, and death, when we are permitted to study the customs and technical formulae of sacred manumissions in antiquity. Deissmann's discussion of this is so illuminating, and so helpful in establishing the point I am trying to make, that I shall quote a portion of it here.

"Among the various ways in which the manumission of a slave could take place by ancient law we find the solemn rite of fictitious purchase of the slave by some divinity. The owner comes with the slave to the temple, sells him there to the god, and receives the purchase money from the temple treasury, the slave having previously paid it in there out of his savings. The slave is now the property of the god; not, however, a slave of the temple, but a protege of the god. Against all the world, especially his former master, he is a completely free man; at the utmost a few pious obligations to his old master are imposed upon him.

"The rite takes place before witnesses; a record is taken, and often perpetuated on stone.

"The usual form of these documents must have been extremely well known, because they are so numerous. It is like this:-

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Date. 'N.N. sold to the Pythian Apollo a male slave named X.Y. at a price of --- minae, for freedom (or on condition that he shall be free, etc.).' Then follow any special arrangements and the names of the witnesses.

"Another form, which occurs less frequently, is 'sale to the god as trustee.!'...St. Paul is alluding to the custom referred to in these records when he speaks of our being made free by Christ. By nature we are slaves of sin,<sup>1</sup> of men,<sup>2</sup> of death,<sup>3</sup> the Jew is furthermore a slave of the law,<sup>4</sup> the heathen a slave of his gods.<sup>5</sup> We become free men by the fact that Christ buys us. And He has done so:- 'Ye were bought with a price,' says St. Paul in two places,<sup>6</sup> using the very formula of the records, 'with a price.' Again, 'For freedom did Christ set us free, .....ye were called for freedom.'<sup>7</sup> ---in these words of St. Paul we have literally the other formula of the records."

Deissmann gives other parallels from the New Testament usage of the language of manumission, and then he continues: "St. Paul, in expanding and adapting to the Greek world the Master's old saying about ransom,<sup>8</sup> was admirably meeting the requirements and the intellectual capacity of the lower classes. For the poor saints of Corinth, among whom there were certainly some slaves, he could not have found a more popular illustration of the past and present work of the Lord. A Christian slave of Corinth going up the path to the Acrocorinthus about Easter-

1. Rom. 6:17, 20, 6, 19; Titus 3:3.

2. I Cor. 7:23.

3. Rom. 8:20f.

4. Gal. 4:1-7; 5:1.

5. Gal. 4:8, 9.

6. I Cor. 6:20; 7:23.

7. Gal. 5:1, 13.

8. Mk. 10:45; Mt. 20:28.



tide, when St. Paul's letter arrived, would see towards  
 the northwest the snowy peak of Parnassus rising clearer  
 and clearer before him, and everyone knew that within the  
 circuit of that commanding summit lay the shrines at which  
 Apollo or Serapis or Asclepius the Healer bought slaves  
with a price, for freedom. Then in the evening assembly  
 was read the letter lately received from Ephesus, and  
 straightway the new Healer was present in spirit with His  
 worshippers, giving them freedom from another slavery,  
redeeming with a price the bondmen of sin and the law--  
 and that price no pious fiction, first received by Him  
 out of the hard-earned denarii of the slave, but paid by  
 Himself."<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps enough has been said to illustrate the  
 fact that both in its form and in its content, the message  
 of Christianity which is contained in the writings consti-  
 tuting the New Testament, would make a very strong appeal  
 to the laboring classes. But these things are not the  
 chief interest of this paper, although they are closely  
 related to it, and prepare us for it. This paper is chief-  
 ly interested in the language of the New Testament, and in  
 particular, the vocabulary employed. For not only was New  
 Testament Christianity a religion for the common people  
 so far as its content and its literary (or non-literary)  
 form was concerned, but its very language was in the most  
l. Deissmann, op. cit., P. 322ff.



real sense, the language of the common people. We should not be surprised at this announcement in view of the foregoing facts, and yet it is in comparatively recent times that men have come to realize the truth and significance of it. As we shall see in the pages following, a very different view has been held by many in the past, and judging by the attitude of the church in the days of Wycliffe toward the translation of the Bible into the language of the people, the truth which this paper seeks to demonstrate had been completely lost for many centuries preceding. As to how the lost truth was rediscovered, and as to the importance of this discovery for Christianity---that is what this paper is intended to reveal. In order to demon~~str~~ate that the New Testament was written in the language of the common people (after having stated in a general way the manner of this discovery) we will turn to a study of the New Testament vocabulary as a means to this end.





# I. THE NON-LITERARY MEMORIALS.

It has been recognized for a long time that the Greek of the New Testament is different from the Greek of the classics, but the significance of this difference has ~~been~~ greatly misunderstood. Some have spoken of New Testament Greek as a "language of the Holy Ghost" while others spoke of it as "something peculiar, obeying its own laws."<sup>1</sup>. For more than a hundred years now, the existence of documents which could have shed a great deal of light on this problem has been known, but the proper scholars did not study them, and therefore the solution of the problem was postponed to more recent times. In 1863 Lightfoot spoke of the fact that we would be greatly helped in studying the New Testament, if we could only get hold of some documents which were written by ordinary people, concerning the affairs of their every day life, and with no thought of their letters being written for publication. The fact was that such documents were even then accessible, and if Lightfoot had read them, the discovery of the value of these documents might have been made thirty years earlier than it was.

It was in 1895 that Mr. Adolf Deissmann, at that time neither a university professor, nor a clergyman, but a young candidate for the ministry, published what has been l. Deissmann, "The Philology of the Greek Bible," P. 43.



spoken of as the greatest single discovery of an interpretative principle ever made in New Testament archeology. The discovery was made in a library one day, when he saw on the table a book that had just come in, a new section of the Berlin Greek papyri. Deissmann picked up this book casually and turned over the pages till he came to the name of a friend of his at the bottom of a page. This stimulated his curiosity. He read the page through, and as he read the thought flashed across his mind: "Why, this is just like the Greek of the New Testament." He began an intensive study of this subject which revealed to him the fact that the New Testament was written in the same Greek as the non-literary memorials. He published his conclusions in a book under the title "Bibelstudien"(1895), and has followed up this book with others which deal with his more mature views upon the same subject.

But what are these non-literary memorials which have yielded such valuable information? It is impossible to come to a complete understanding of the subject under consideration, without a description of this material. We are already familiar with the literary background of Christianity. The writings of historians, philosophers, and various other portions of the Graeco-Roman literature have been studied carefully and with valuable results. The fact of the matter is, the literary memorials are valued so

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highly that in some quarters it is consciously or unconsciously believed that the literature of the Imperial period will enable us to restore the historical background of Primitive Christianity in its entirety.

Such a belief is by no means warranted, however, because of the fact that the literature of this period reflects largely the life and customs of the higher classes, or tells about the lower classes from the viewpoint of the higher classes, and therefore cannot give us a full and true view of the groups to whom Christianity made its strongest appeal. It is much the same as the manner which has been used in studying history--that is, a study of rulers and armies, of generals and outstanding movements, with little attention being paid to the great mass of people who have lived quietly and often nobly, and whose influence has been greater than historians in the past have reckoned. Therefore, we are turning in our desire to understand the New Testament to the non-literary, as distinguished from these literary writings.

The non-literary memorials have been divided into three classes, in the discussion by Deissmann, and that same classification will be followed in this discussion. First there are the writings on stone, or inscriptions; second, the writings on bits of broken pottery, or ostraca; and then, those which have yielded the greatest results, the writings on papyrus, or the papyri. These are classed

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together as non-literary memorials, because none of these writings were intended as "literature", but were simply intended to carry a message relating to some affair which concerned primarily the individual doing the writing, or the writer and the one to whom the message was addressed. Thousands of such bits of writing have been discovered and classified by scholars and archeologists, and many more which have been uncovered are being studied, transcribed, and classified.

The main sources from which these non-literary memorials have come have been ancient tombs and the rubbish heaps outside of ancient towns in Egypt. Due to the very dry climate there, these scraps of writing have been preserved through the centuries, and now are yielding a very rich harvest to the scholar. They consist of letters, business receipts, memoranda, official documents, and other writings of a general character which give us a most interesting cross section of the life of the ordinary people who lived in that period. Many of these writings are dated, and so have made it possible to tell exactly when they were written. Of course they have yielded some exceedingly interesting and valuable information relating to other problems connected with the understanding of the New Testament, apart from the light they have shed upon the true nature of the New Testament Greek.

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While it is not within the scope of this paper to go into some<sup>of</sup> these other matters with any detail, still it will help us to a better understanding of what the discovery of these non-literary memorials has meant, if one instance is cited by way of illustration. For more than that there will not be space. Professor James Hope Moulton, who has given a great deal of time to a study of these documents, and particularly the papyri, is the author of the following.<sup>1</sup>

"Now let me mention in a word or two what we may get from the more definitely official forms and papers. I want to speak especially of one point. A large number of the papyri are census papers. You will remember how there has been for many years past serious difficulty about a noteworthy verse in the Gospel of Luke, in the second chapter. That chapter begins, as you know, with the statement that in those days there went forth a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the inhabitants of the world--that is, of the Roman Empire--should be enrolled in a census. 'This was the first enrolment made when Quirinius was governor of Syria.' Fifty years ago historians who read those words were forced to say that they contained almost as many mistakes as it was possible to get into two lines. Even those who were most unwilling to admit that Luke had made such mistakes found themselves obliged

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1. Moulton, From Egyptian Rubbish Heaps, P. 19ff.



to have recourse to conjectures which, I am afraid, sounded much like special pleading. But the explanation some of us kept hoping for has come, and come mainly through the papyri. First came the proof, from the masses of census papers found among our new sources, that every fourteen years there was general enrolment. For, fortunately, the papers are dated. This is their normal style: 'In the year so and so of the Emperor so and so'---then would follow the whole string of his titles---'I, A.B., son of C.D., aged x years, with a straight nose, black hair, scar on my right shin, enroll myself, together with E.F., my wife, aged y years! and so on, with name and description of each person. The census paper would proceed further with a statement of effects. They had twenty sheep, two camels, and their house faced a particular street on the south, and adjoined somebody's garden on the west, and so forth. It is reasonable to assume that as Egypt was under the Imperial Roman Government at that time, there was a similar fourteen years' census taken in other parts of the world. Now we know that there was a census taken in the year A.D.6. We actually possess a census paper from the census of A.D.34, and probably one from A.D. 20. The only thing we have to conjecture--and it becomes highly reasonable to conjecture now--is that not only was there one in the year A.D.6, but that there was also one in the year 8B.C., which on other grounds has

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become a more and more probable date for the birth of Jesus.

"Now for Luke's second 'blunder,' for there were three chief blunders attributed to him. It was regarded as certain that if there was a census people did not have to go up to any ancestral town for it. Well, but we have now got two or three pages from a Roman official's letter-book, dated A.D. 104, and in it we read a rescript from the prefect of Egypt ordering that all people are to go back to the county in which they live within the next six weeks in order to be ready for the census. Exit blunder number two!

"What about blunder number three? Quirinius was governor of Syria in the year A.D. 6. We know that, and he carried out the census in that year. Therefore, it is a blunder when Luke tells us that he was looking after a census somewhere about 8 B.C. Moreover, we actually know the name of the man who was governor of Syria in that year, and it is not Quirinius. But about a couple of years ago Sir William Ramsay dug up a stone which shows that Quirinius was in Syria at that time after all. He had been sent there especially, as an extraordinary commissioner, to look after the census, which was a new thing and likely to be unpopular. I suppose it was because he did such good work that he was sent to the job again when the next fourteen years were over. So you see how with the aid of these rubbish-heaps of Egypt and the stones of Asia Minor we can

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show what an excellent historian Luke was after all."

There is much more of interest that the non-literary memorials have brought to light, but to go into these matters would demand more space than can be permitted here. Before leaving the subject of these memorials themselves, and turning to the light which they have thrown upon the language of the New Testament it will be best to have a clearer conception of the three different classes before mentioned; i.e., the inscriptions, ostraca, and papyri.

"The bulk of the INSCRIPTIONS are on stone, but to these must be added inscriptions cast and engraved in bronze or scratched on tablets of lead or gold, a few wax tablets, the scribblings found on walls, and the texts on coins and medals. These inscriptions, of which there are hundreds of thousands, are discovered on the site of the ancient civilised settlements of the Graeco-Roman world in its fullest extent, from the Rhine to the upper course of the Nile, and from the Euphrates to Britain. Inscriptions had been noted and studied in antiquity itself, in the Middle Ages, and in the days of the Renaissance, and in the eighteenth century there was one scholar, Johann Walch, who pressed Greek inscriptions into the service of New Testament exegesis. But the nineteenth century is the first that really deserves to be called the

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age of epigraphy."<sup>1</sup>

In recent years the English and the Austrians have made important discoveries on the site of ancient Ephesus, as have the British investigators in Asia Minor in general, the Germans at Pergamum, Magnesia on the Maeander, Priene, Miletus, and other places in Asia Minor, in Thera, Cos, and other islands, and in Syria and Arabia, the French in Macedonia, at Didyma, Delphi and in Delos, the Russians on the north coast of the Black Sea, the Belgians also on the Pontus Euxinus, the Americans in Asia Minor, in Syria, and at Corinth, and the Greeks in various places.<sup>2</sup> Many scholars have employed the Greek inscriptions in the elucidation of the New Testament.

"There is one circumstance which sometimes makes the inscriptions less productive than might have been expected, especially those that are more or less of the official kind. The style has often been polished up, and then they are formal, artificial, cold as the marble that bears them, and stiff as the characters incised upon the unyielding stone."<sup>3</sup> "The Inscriptions, particularly the more lengthy and the official ones, often approximate in style to the literary language, and are thus readily liable to affectation and mannerism; what the papyrus leaves contain is much less affected, proceeding as it does, from the thousand requirements and circumstances of the daily

1. Deissmann, LAE, p. 11, 12.

2. Ibid., p. 13 ff.

3. Ibid., p. 24.

4. And the ostraca too, he might have added.



life of unimportant people. If the legal documents, among the Papyri show a certain fixed mode of speech, marked by the formalism of the office, yet the many letter-writers, male and female, express themselves all the more unconstrainedly. This holds good, in particular, in regard to all that is, relatively speaking, matter of form. But also in regard to the vocabulary, the Inscriptions afford materials which well repay the labour spent on them. What will yet be yielded by the comprehensive collections of Inscriptions, which have not yet been read by the author in their continuity, may be surmised from the incidental discoveries to which he has been guided by the citations given by Fränkel. What might we not learn, e.g., from the one inscription of Xanthus the Lycian!"<sup>1</sup>

The Ostraca are closely allied to the papyri, insofar as the nature of the writings on them is concerned. As has been previously indicated, the ostraca are bits of broken pottery upon which something has been written. In the past they have been greatly neglected, no one seeming to realize their true value. Of course, an ancient scrap of broken pottery does seem to be a rather worthless object. Concerning the ostraca Deissmann says:

"I am reminded of a sentence in one of Pastor von Bodelschwingh's annual reports of a scrap-collecting organisation for the support of the Bethel charities near Bielefeld. "Nothing is absolutely worthless," he says, "except bits of broken earthenware and the fag-ends of ci-

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<sup>1</sup>Deissmann, Bible Studies, p.180.



gars,' and the opinion seems to have been shared by the peasants of Egypt, at least so far as bits of pottery were concerned. They rummaged among ancient ruins, and whenever they came across such pitiable objects as bits of earthenware vessels, they threw them away at once. Many a European with a scholar's training must have been quite convinced that ancient potsherds were valueless, even when there was writing visible on them<sup>1</sup>; otherwise one cannot understand why they were to all intents and purposes ignored by research for so long a time, comparatively. After all, what can there be more pitiful than an earthen potsherd? The prophet in his emphatic irony could think of no image more apt to describe man's nothingness than that of a potsherd among potsherds.<sup>2</sup>

"In the time of the ancients potsherd were not thrown away as useless for ever. From the rubbish-heaps they not unfrequently made their way once more to the humble homes of the proletariat, there to be used as writing material. Few of us, however, realised this fact until Wilcken published his book on the subject. Of course in our schooldays we had heard of the judgment of Clisthenes, but in such a way that most of us, if asked, would have said that ostracism was the Athenian statesman's own invention, and that he caused small tablets of earthenware to be made specially for the people to record their

1."As late as 1819 an architect name Gau found 'an innumerable quantity' of inscribed ostraca at Dakkeh in Nubia. He made drawings of several, kept two, and threw the rest away as needless ballast!" Deissmann, LAE, p.51,n.4.

2.Isa.45:9. (R.V.)





votes. As a matter of fact, many of the ostraca employed for voting have been discovered at Athens, and some at least of them are obviously pieces of broken vessels.

"Wilcken goes on to show most convincingly that the habit of writing on ostraca must have been in force at Athens in the sixth century B.C. at latest. The potsherd was in fact highly popular as writing material throughout the ancient Mediterranean world. We now possess an abundance of very ancient ostraca inscribed with writing in ink.....

"The potsherd was also in use in the Hellenistic period. This is proved firstly by the evidence of various authors, and secondly by thousands of ostraca inscribed with Greek which have been preserved all through the centuries in the burning, rainless soil of Egypt. Like the papyri, which the same agency has preserved to us in such numbers, the ostraca are a mirror of the changes of nationality and civilisation that occurred in the Nile Valley. ....The texts with which they are inscribed are of the most miscellaneous kind--receipts, letters, contracts, bills, directions as to payments, decrees, and even extracts from classical authors.....The great majority of the ostraca we possess are certainly tax-receipts. ....To theologians the ostraca are of no small value. They add many new touches to our knowledge of the life of

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ancient times. They throw light on large tracts of the civilization upon which the Greek Old Testament, many of the books of the Apocrypha, the works of Philo and of the Egyptian Christians were based. They show us the men of the age of fulfilment in their workaday clothes, and they afford reliable evidence concerning the language spoken in the Hellenised Mediterranean world at the time when the apostolic mission became to "the Greeks" a Greek. In these facts lies the great indirect value of the ostraca to the student of Greek Judaism and of the first centuries of Christianity.....

"Even more decidedly than the papyri, the ostraca are documents belonging to the lower orders of the people. The potsherd was in fact the cheapest writing material there was, obtainable by every one gratis from the nearest rubbish-heap. For this reason it was so admirably adapted for recording the vote of the Demos in cases of ostracism. The ostrakon was beneath the dignity of the well-to-do. As a proof of the poverty of Cleanthes the Stoic it is related that he could not afford papyrus and therefore wrote on ostraca or on leather. In the same way we find the writers of Coptic potsherd letters even in Christian times apologising now and then to their correspondents for having made use of an ostrakon in temporary lack of papyrus. We, however, have cause to rejoice at the breach of etiquette.

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The ostraca take us right to the heart of the class to which the primitive Christians were most nearly related, and in which the new faith struck root in the great world."<sup>1</sup>

The third class of these non-literary memorials, the papyri, is, so far<sup>as</sup> results obtained up to the present are concerned, the most important of all. Papyrus, from which we get our word paper, was the chief writing material for many centuries, its use going back to very ancient times. The oldest bit of written papyrus known to be in existence is estimated as being between four and five thousand years old.<sup>2</sup> From that remote date it can be proved that papyrus was in use in Egypt for over 3,500 years. "Brittle and perishable as it appears on a superficial view, it is in reality as indestructible as the Pyramids and the obelisks."<sup>2</sup>

Papyrus gets its name from the papyrus plant, a marsh plant with a smooth, straight, triangular stalk, ten to eighteen feet high, and containing a moist pith, the stalk being surmounted by an involucre with brush-like plumes. It may now be found growing in the Sudan and Central Africa, in Palestine, in Sicily, Italy, and probably in most botanical gardens.<sup>3</sup> "The pith stem was cut crosswise into lengths of fifteen or twenty centimetres according to wish, and then cut lengthwise into thin flat strips. These tape-like strips were laid vertically to the edge of the table side by side till there were enough for a leaf of the desired size. Then other strips were

1. Beissmann, Light from the Ancient East, p. 51 ff.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 20.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 25, 26.





laid across them, that is to say, horizontally, or running with the edge of the table. Between the two layers was a thin glue or paste. These leaves were pressed, so that the strips should all stick flat together, and left to dry. The drying is easy in Egypt. Things dry almost before they have come to perceive that they are wet. The dried leaves were a trifle rough. For the thread-like walls of those longitudinal cells often rose above the surface. For nice paper the surface was then smoothed off, it may be with pumice-stone or with an ink-fish's bone, or it was hammered. It was a very good surface to write upon, not unlike birch bark, which many readers will know from the Adirondacs or Maine or Canada."<sup>1</sup> Deissmann tells us that the making of papyrus still goes on, particularly in Sicily.<sup>2</sup> There was no stated size for the papyrus sheet, as this would depend upon the length of the strips of which the single sheet ~~was~~ made, and any number of sheets might be pasted together to form a roll. Papyrus rolls have been found measuring as much as 20 and even 45 yards.<sup>3</sup>

The writer usually wrote first upon that side of the papyrus upon which the fibres ran horizontally. This is known as the recto. To write on the other side, known as the verso, was exceptional, and if a sheet of papyrus has writing on the verso in a different hand from that on the recto, it is more than likely that the former

1. Gregory, The Canon and Text of the New Testament, p.301.

2. Deissmann, LAZ, p.27.

3. Ibid., p.29.



is the later of the two. Perhaps this is enough concerning the material upon which have been preserved the greater part of the non-literary memorials which we are to study. One other matter must be mentioned before we turn to the actual study of the language of the ordinary people of the Roman Empire during the period in which our New Testament was being formed.

How were all these fragments of papyrus discovered? We have no record of the purchase of papyri by European visitors before 1778. In that year a man who dealt in antiquities was attracted by some peasants who were burning rolls of papyrus in order to enjoy the aromatic smoke which they gave forth while burning. Noticing that there was writing upon these rolls he purchased one of the rolls, which was a document from the year 191-192 A.D., and then stood by and watched them burn the rest. However this purchase seemed to stir up a new interest in the papyri, and since that time the interest has steadily grown, accompanied increased activities in the search for more.<sup>1</sup> Hundreds and thousands of sheets and scraps of papyrus were yielded up from the mounds of rubbish marking the site of the ancient "City of Crocodiles" in the province of El-Fayum(Middle Egypt), in 1877. It is noteworthy that the majority of the important discoveries have come from the rubbish heaps at the sites of ancient Egyptian towns.

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1.Deissmann, LAE, p.31.



"But it was in 1897 that the new era of papyri discovery began. When, in that year, these two young scholars (Grenfell and Hunt) started to dig at Oxyrhynchus neither of them could possibly have dreamed that the most far-reaching discovery in its bearing upon the New Testament which had ever been made in Christian history was about to be accomplished. Nor, indeed, did they imagine this even after they had begun to uncover from the afsch (rubbish) of the mounds these masses of papyri. They found some of these the first day of their digging at Behnesa, and almost continuously--day after day, and week after week--these ancient documents were upturned. How many thousands of papyrus scraps these young men took to England the writer does not know, but so many that it will yet be a generation before they can all be thoroughly examined. When the store boxes, in which these treasures were packed, came to London from Oxyrhynchus, they were so heavy that they were weighed by the ton when billed by the freight agent. In 1897 these men gave their first official report, having examined at Oxford the contents of some 1,300 of these documents. This first voluem contained 158 texts, tho four-fifths of the whole collection had not yet been unpacked, and the best part of what they had obtained had been left at the Cairo museum. Perhaps no

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published work in our generation ever aroused more curious interest than this, and the volumes which followed fully sustained the expectation."<sup>1</sup>

A very interesting story is connected with the discovery of papyri at the site of the ancient Tebtunis, situated in the south of the Fayum. This occurred in the latter part of 1899 and the opening of 1900, in connection with the same men who uncovered the Oxyrhynchus papyri--Grenfell and Hunt. There is a slight difference in the manner in which the details of the story are told by different writers, but the essential facts are the same.

They were searching for papyri at the place above mentioned, but for many weeks they had been able to uncover nothing with their spades but crocodiles. It was evidently the **site** of an **ancient** cemetery where sacred crocodiles had been buried. Crocodiles were not the object of their search, but nothing but crocodiles appeared. Finally they gave up in disgust, and ordered the workmen to fill in the excavated dirt. One of the workmen, who was also disgusted over having all the work for nothing, drove his spade through one of the crocodiles and bursted it open. And then was made the discovery that the crocodile mummy was stuffed with papyri. Some had rolls of it stuffed in their mouths and others were wrapped with it.

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1. Sobern, The New Archaeological Discoveries, p. 17.





As Cobern comments, "If they had been laid to rest clothed in garments more glorious than those of Solomon, these sacred animals could not have aroused more devout admiration on the day of their resurrection than they did when these young explorers found literary fragments of ancient classics, perfectly preserved, royal ordinances, petitions, land surveys, contracts and accounts, and private letters which had formed the strange shroud of these deities when they were reverently laid to rest 2,000 years ago."<sup>1</sup> And so, in such ways as these, the spade of the archeologist has been uncovering the valuable bits of papyrus, containing writing in the language which we are now to study. The great bulk of this writing was done by common, ordinary people. In the pages that follow, the vocabulary of the non-literary memorials will be compared with the vocabulary of the New Testament, with the hope of rendering more clear the close relation between the two.

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1. Cobern, Op. cit., p. 40.



## II. THE WORDS ONCE CONSIDERED "BIBLICAL" OR "NEW TESTAMENT" WORDS.

It has already been pointed out that the scholars were long puzzled over the differences between the Greek of the New Testament, and what was known as "profane" Greek.<sup>1</sup> They often discussed from varying viewpoints, the significance of these differences, but there seemed little that could be done toward reaching a real solution, save to speculate. There was a considerable list of words which did not seem to be used anywhere outside of the Bible, i.e., the New Testament, and the Septuagint. These words were called "Biblical" words. At the end of Thayer's "Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament", there is a list of words which are so designated. In this list, there are, altogether, 767 words. This from a total of 4,829 words used in the New Testament.<sup>2</sup>

Deissmann shows however, that out of the 767 words listed by Thayer, Thayer himself notes that 218 of them occur in Polybius, Plutarch, and elsewhere, leaving only 549. Examining these more closely we find that a number are proper names, others are words borrowed, or transcribed from Semitic or Latin sources, while still others are numerals. Then there are quotations from Josephus, Plutarch, Marcus Aurelius, etc., which use still

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1. See p. 11.

2. Deissmann, LAE, p. 76.



more of these words, and thus reduce to an even greater extent the number which may be designated as "Biblical" or "New Testament" words.

"The number of 'Biblical' words shrinks, however, still further if we pursue the search among our non-literary texts. From the immemorial homes of Greek culture in Hellas and the islands, from the country towns of Asia Minor and the villages of Egypt no less than from the great centres of commerce on the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, year after year brings us new illustrations. Non-Christian texts are found containing words that were formerly--although 'the kingdom of God is not in word'--thought to pertain exclusively to Primitive Christianity or the Old and New Greek Testaments."<sup>1</sup> Deissmann is of the opinion that in the whole New Testament vocabulary of nearly 5,000 words, the number which will finally prove to be "Christian" or "Biblical" Greek words will not be more than 50, with the strong probability that the number will be even smaller.<sup>2</sup> There is considerable difference between 767 words and 50 or less, and the non-literary memorials have played no small part in showing the truth in this matter. By way of illustration a number of words, formerly considered "Biblical" words, will now be studied in the light which the non-literary memorials shed upon them.

1. Deissman, op.cit., p.79.

2. Ibid., p.78.



i.  $\beta\alpha\acute{\iota}\omega\nu$ , a palm-branch. This word is included in the list of Biblical words in Thayer's Lexicon. Its only occurrence in the New Testament is in John 12:13, which is a part of the account of the triumphal entry into Jerusalem, and says that the people "took the branches of the palm trees, and went forth to meet him." There is nothing distinctively Christian about a palm branch, so we are not surprised that the papyri are able to show us that either in the form given above, or in forms closely akin to it, the word was well known in the ancient Greek speaking world.

Moulton and Milligan, in their valuable work which illustrates so ably the influence of the non-literary memorials upon our understanding of the vocabulary of the Greek Testament,<sup>1</sup> tell us that the word occurs in the Papiri Fiorentini<sup>2</sup> of a palm branch used as a measuring rod. Although this reference is<sup>of</sup> a rather late date, the writing from which it is taken belonging to the fifth or sixth century A.D., when we add its testimony to that of the other references<sup>3</sup> the conclusion must be that this word was not originated by the "Seventy", in whose translation of the Old Testament it first appears.

For instance,  $\beta\alpha\acute{\iota}\alpha$  is quoted from a text edited by Wessely;<sup>4</sup> and  $\beta\alpha\acute{\iota}\omega\nu$  occurs in another text,<sup>5</sup> but with

1. See The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament, (1911-1929) Vol. 1-8, by the authors named above.

2. Vol. I, p. 37.

3. Moulton and Milligan, op. cit.,  $\beta\alpha\acute{\iota}\omega\nu$ .

4. Tebtunis Papyri, II, p. 69. (From VGT)

5. Papiri Greci Inesi della Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, V, vii, 17 (from VGT).





βαῖς as nominative in the preceding line. The compound βαῖον is presumed by the compounds βαιοφορεῖν and βαιοφορία. The former is used in the application for the purchase of a priestly office which was written in A.D.146, and found amongst the Tebtunis Papyri.<sup>1</sup> In this application the writer promises "to carry the palm branch" (βαιοφορεῖν) and perform all the other needful offices.

Of the many other references to the kindred forms of this word in the papyri, the only one which the writer can mention here,<sup>2</sup> is one from Oxyrhynchus.<sup>3</sup> The occurrence of a form of the word may be seen in a list of articles for a sacrifice. A number of objects were to be supplied to the strategus for the celebration of a sacrifice 'to the most sacred Nile.' The following is a translation made by Hunt.

"To the strategus, articles for the sacrifice of the most sacred Nile on Pauni 30: 1 calf, 2 jars of sweet wine, 16 wafers, 16 garlands, 16 cones, 16 cakes, 16 green palm-branches (βαῖς ἁλωπάς ἑ), 16 reeds likewise, oil, honey, milk, every spice except frankincense." This list was made some time during the second century of the Christian era, but even this is not the earliest evidence of a use of our word outside of the Bible. One reference is given to a use of the form βαῖς as early

1. Tebtunis Papyri, II, 294:10. (from VGT).

2. The sources of these other references are not amongst those at my disposal.

3. Oxyrhynchus Papyri, IX, 1211:8.



as A.D. 78-9.<sup>1</sup> This with a number of other references which could not be cited here bring ample evidence to convince us that *παῖον* must be deducted from the list known as "Biblical and ecclesiastical" words.

ii. *ἀναστατώω*, to stir up, excite, unsettle, upset. Thayer tells us that it is a verb found nowhere in profane authorities. In the New Testament it occurs three times. The first time is in connection with the mob in Thessalonica, as related by Luke.<sup>2</sup> "These that have turned the world upside down (*ἀναστατώσαντες*) are come hither also." In Acts 21:38 Paul is asked, "Art thou not then the Egyptian, who before these days stirred up (*ἀναστατώσας*) to sedition and led out into the wilderness the four thousand men of the Assassins?" The only other time the word is used in the New Testament is when the Apostle Paul tells the Galatians, "I would that they that unsettle you would even go beyond circumcision."<sup>3</sup> The word here translated "unsettle" is *ἀναστατοῦντες*.

The place of this word in the vernacular is proved very clearly by a private letter written in the year A.D. 41, and therefore almost contemporary with the Biblical citations.<sup>4</sup> I am able to reproduce only the part given by Moulton and Milligan. *μή ἵνα ἀναστατώσῃς ἡμεῖς*, "do not drive us out." But there is an exceedingly interesting use made of the word in another letter which

1. *Greek Lexicon in the British Museum*, Vol. 1, p. 104 (from VGT).

2. Ac. 17:6

3. Gal. 5:12/

4. Moulton and Milligan, op. cit., Part I, *ἀναστατώω*.



is somewhat later, and which I will give in full. The letter was found among the Oxyrhynchus Papyri, and was written in the second or third century A.D. It is a letter to a father from his youthful son, who begs to be taken to Alexandria. It was written in a rude uncial hand, and "its grammar and spelling leave a good deal to be desired."<sup>1</sup>

Θέων θέωνι τῷ πατρί  
χαίρειν, καλῶς ἐποίησες  
οὐκ ἀπένηχες με μετέ σοῦ  
εἰς πόλιν. ἢ οὐ θέλεις  
ἀπενέκκειν μετέ σοῦ εἰς Ἀλεξ  
ανδρείαν οὐ μή γράψω σε ἐπιστολ  
ήν οὔτε λαλῶ σε οὔτε υἱένω  
σε, εἴτα ἂν δέ ἐλθῇς εἰς Ἀλεξαν  
ρίαν οὐ μή λάβω χεῖραν παρὰ σοῦ  
οὔτε πάλι χαίρω σε λυπὸν. ἂν μή  
θέλῃς ἀπενέκαι με ταῦτα σ  
γείνεται. καὶ ἢ μήτηρ κοκ εἶπε  
Ἀρχελάω ὅτι ἀναστατοῖ  
κε ἄρρον αὐτόν.  
καλῶς δὲ ἐποίησες δῶρά μοι  
ἐπεκψες μεγάλα ἀράκια πεπλανηκ  
ανημωδεκε. τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἔβ ὅτι ἐπλενο  
λύρον πέμψον εἰς με παρακαλῶ  
σε. ἂν, μή πεκψῇς οὐ μή φαγω, οὐ  
μή πεινώ. ταῦτα.  
ἐρῶσθε σε εὐχομαι

"I son to his father Theon,  
greeting. It was a fine thing  
of you not to take me with you  
to the city! If you won't  
take me with you to Alexandria  
I won't write you a letter or  
speak to you or say goodbye to  
you: and if you go to Alexan-  
dria I won't take your hand nor  
ever greet you again. That  
is what will happen if you  
won't take me. Mother said  
to Archelaus, 'It quite vexes  
him to be left behind. (1).'  
It was good of you to send me  
great gifts...on the 12th, the  
day you sailed. Send me a  
lyre, I implore you. If you  
don't, I won't eat, I won't  
drink; I care now!"

The above is the translation of Grenfall and Hunt. Deissmann has offered a translation that varies considerably in the latter part of the letter, and is so interesting that I shall offer a part of his translation. "My mother also said to Archelaus, 'He driveth me mad: away with him.' But thou hast done well. Thou hast sent me great gifts--locust-beans. They deceived



us there on the 12th day, when thou didst sail. Finally, send for me, I beseech thee. If thou sendest not, I will not eat nor drink. Even so. Fare thee well, I pray. Tybi 18."<sup>1</sup> On the verso is printed the address: "Deliver to Theon from Theonas his son."

This is an extremely interesting human document, and Deissmann has some very amusing, as well as enlightening comments to make upon it, but we now have sufficient before us to make plain that which I wish to illustrate. These uses of our word ἀνασTαTόw are ample proof that it was not a word peculiar to the vocabulary of the Scriptures, but that instead of that, it was a part of the vernacular of that day. Whether we take the translation of Grenfell and Hunt or that of Deissmann, the important thing for this subject is that the Greek word translated "upsets" in the first instance, and "driveth mad" in the second, is the word that Thayer designates as a "Biblical" word, ἀνασTαTόw.

iii. σουδαρίον, a handkerchief. This word, which appears four times in the New Testament, is likewise listed among the words which were thought to be peculiar to the Bible. The first appearance of this word in the New Testament is in the "Parable of the Pounds," recorded by Luke<sup>2</sup>. "And another came, saying, 'Lord, be hold, here is thy pound, which I kept laid up in a napkin.'" The word appears twice

1. Deissmann, LAE, p. 202.

2. Lk. 19:20.







in the Fourth Gospel, first in connection with the raising of Lazarus<sup>1</sup> and second in connection with the resurrection of Jesus.<sup>2</sup> Both times the word is translated "napkin," as it is in Luke's "Parable of the Pounds."

The fourth and last appearance of the word, so far as the New Testament is concerned, is in the book of Acts, and here it is translated "handkerchiefs." "And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: insomuch that unto the sick were carried away from his body handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them."<sup>3</sup>

That this is not a word peculiar to the Bible is proven by the references given to other usages of the word by Moulton and Milligan.<sup>4</sup> In two marriage contracts, one dated A.D. 190 and the other A.D. 230, a *σουλάριον* is included in the bride's dowry.<sup>5</sup> In a charm for procuring dreams which was written some time during the third century<sup>6</sup> the word occurs again. And finally, on one of a group of magical papyri from the fourth century<sup>7</sup> there is a reference to "a sudarium of fine linen." Therefore one more word is removed from the "Biblical" list. Although these references are to usage of the word dating later than the writing of the New Testament, the usage is too common to think that it was first originated in the Bible.

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1. John 11:44.

2. John 20:7.

3. Acts 19:12.

4. VGT, Part III, *σουλάριον*.

5. Corpus Papyrorum Raineri Griechische Texte, I, 27:7 and ib. 21:19.

6. Greek Papyri in the British Museum, 121:826.

7. Papyri Osloensis, I, 1:289.



iv. σπεκουλάτωρ, a looker-out, spy, scout, courier. Later it came to mean "executioner." "Under the emperors an attendant and member of the bodyguard, employed as messengers, watchers, and executioners."<sup>1</sup> The word appears in Thayer's "Biblical" list. Its only appearance in the New Testament is the following: "and straightway the king sent forth a soldier of his guard, and commanded to bring his head: and he went and beheaded him in the prison."<sup>2</sup> This will at once be recognized as Marks account of the death of John the Baptist. The word translated "a soldier of his guard" is σπεκουλάτορα, a form of σπεκουλάτωρ.

Turning now to the non-literary memorials, we find a list of accounts from A.D. 191-192, among the Greek Papyri from the Cairo Museum.<sup>3</sup> In this list are the words Θαύσαρις σπεκουλάτορι (δραχμαὶ) δ̄. We have here a testimonial to the existence of our word in the vernacular Greek at that period. For evidence of a later date we may turn to the Oxyrhynchus Papyri.<sup>4</sup> Here we have an order from the fourth century, addressed to a village police-officer to supply a donkey and a guard. In the following translation of this order, our word is easily evident.

"From the speculator to the chief of police of

1. Thayer, Lexicon.

2. Mk. 6:27.

3. Ibid., 30: vii, 31.

4. P Oxy IX, 1193.



the village of Taampemou. Immediately on receiving my letter supply one donkey together with one guard to the sentinel whom I have sent. Signed by me." The form of the word here is σπεκουλάτορος. There are other occurrences of the word in the Oxyrhynchus Papyri, one of the late fourth century, and one of the fifth century<sup>1</sup> but perhaps we have here enough evidence without giving further attention to this word. Then let us strike σπεκουλάτωρ from the list of "Biblical" words. It too is a part of the vocabulary of the common people.

v. κυριακός, of or belonging to the Lord. Thayer designates it a "Biblical and ecclesiastical word." It appears twice in the New Testament, first in I Corinthians, in the following setting: "When therefore ye assemble yourselves together, it is not possible to eat the Lord's (κυριακόν) supper."<sup>2</sup> The other appearance of this word in the New Testament is in the well known statement in the Apocalypse of John, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's (κυριακῇ) day."<sup>3</sup>

Deissmann tells us that Cremer as early as 1895, noticed the extra-biblical usage of this word: "belonging to the lord, the ruler, e.g., τὸ κυριακόν, public or fiscal property; synonym. τὸ βασιλικόν (rare)."<sup>4</sup> Since the publication of the Richter Inscription by Johann Valentin Francke (Berlin, 1830), κυριακός has been comparatively

1. P Oxy. Vol. IX, 1214 and 1223.

2. I Cor. 11:20.

3. Rev. 1:10.

4. Deissmann, Bible Studies, p. 217.



frequently noticed in Inscription and Papyri, so Deissman tells us, although it doesn't seem to <sup>have</sup> gotten into a Lexicon as anything but a "Biblical" word before 1895. We will now note a few instances of its uses in the Papyri.

In one example of its usage, from A.D. 163, a camel is provided "for Imperial (εἰς Κυριακὰς) service on the caravans that travel from Bernice."<sup>1</sup> In a circular letter to officials, found at Oxyrhynchus, and dated at about A.D. 184, we have the following: "I now make this second order applying to all that the imperial moneys (τοῦ Κυριακοῦ Χρήματος)"<sup>2</sup> From the same place we have the registration of a vegetable shop (A.D. 222) which uses our word. "I register the fact that I have a vegetable-seller's shop in working order from Paction of the 3rd year up to the present day, situated in the said 3rd year at Psou in Imperial ownership (ἐν κτήσσει Κυριακῇ) in Broad street, and have paid for repairs 20 drachmae more through Dioscorus, collector, as stated in the receipt."<sup>3</sup> Many more references are given by Moulton and Milligan<sup>4</sup> but the illustrations we have before us should be sufficient to illustrate the use of Κυριακός in the extra-biblical sources.

vi. λογία, or λογεία, a collection. "Not found in profane authorities," says Thayer. Its only New Testa-

1. Greek Papyri in the British Museum, 188:10.

2. P Oxy. III, 474:40, 41.

3. P Oxy. XII, 1461:10.

4. VGT, Part IV, Κυριακός.





ment appearance is in I Corinthians. "Now concerning the collection (τῆς λογίας) for the saints, as I gave order to the churches of Galatia, so also do ye. Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store, as he may prosper, that no collections (λογίαι) be made when I come."<sup>1</sup> Not only was this word long thought to belong to the list of "Biblical" words, but also its derivation was misunderstood.

Regarding the former, Deissmann wrote, "λογεῖα can be demonstrated to have been used in Egypt from the 2nd cent. B.C. at the latest: it is found in Papyrus documents belonging to the *Χοαχάτας* or *Χολχάται* (the orthography and etymology of the word are uncertain), a society which had to perform a part of the ceremonies required in the embalming of bodies: they are named in one place ἀδελφοὶ οἱ τὰς λειτουργίας ἐν ταῖς νεκρίαις παρεχόμενοι. They had the right, as members of the guild, to institute collections, and they could sell this right. Such a collection is called *λογεῖα*:..... We find the word, further, in the taxation-roll.....of the Ptolemaic period, in which it is used six times--probably in the sense of tax."<sup>2</sup>

In a letter of Demophon to Ptolemaeus, dated 245 or 244 B.C, we have an example of the early use of *λογεῖα*. "Demophon to Ptolemaeus, greeting. Appended is

1. I Cor. 16:1, 2.

2. Deissmann, Bible Studies, p. 142



a copy of the letter which has come to me from Apollodotus about the collection ( $\tau\tilde{\eta}\varsigma \lambda\omicron\gamma\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha\varsigma$ ) of green-stuffs. Do you therefore exact payment now from the purchasers on the silver standard, in accordance with his instructions; and any Syrian cloths that may be deposited with you accept, if satisfactory, and buy at the prices below written. Good-bye. The 2nd year, Mecheir 12."

"Apollodotus to Demophon, greeting. Take in hand now the collection ( $\lambda\omicron\gamma\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha$ ) of the green-stuffs, and accept Syrian cloths at 6 drachmae with an agio on half the sum at the rate of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  obols in 4 drachmae, for that is the rate published by the government. Good-bye. The 2nd year, Mecheir 12.

"(Addressed) To Ptolemaeus."<sup>1</sup>

In the collection of Tebtunis Papyri there is a letter from a tax-farmer dated 111 B.C. It seems that he was anxious to retain the right to collect the tax in question, in connection with which he says, "I again bid you be in attendance, and urge on Nicon also concerning the collection ( $\pi\epsilon\rho\acute{\iota} \tau\tilde{\eta}\varsigma \lambda\omicron\gamma\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha\varsigma$ )."<sup>2</sup> It will be noticed that this is exactly the expression used by the Apostle Paul in I Corinthians 16:1.

There is an excellent illustration of the use of this word at a time almost contemporary with I Corinthians in a declaration on oath by a certain Epimachus, an

1. The Hibeh Papyri, I, 51:2.

2. The Tebtunis Papyri, I, 58:55.



inhabitant of Psobthis, stating that he had not exacted any irregular contributions, and that for the future he would not be in a position to do so. This illustration comes from Oxyrhynchus, and is dated A.D.66. A translation follows: "To the scribe of the Oxyrhynchite nome from Epimachus, son of Pausiris, son of Ptolemaeus, whose mother is Heraclea, daughter of Epimachus, an inhabitant of the village of Psobthis in the lower toparchy. I swear by Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus Imperator that I have levied no contributions (*λογείαν*) for any purpose whatever in the said village and that henceforward I shall not become headman of a village; otherwise let me be liable to the consequences of the oath." Date.<sup>1</sup> In this case we see *λογεία* is used for irregular local contributions as opposed to regular taxes.

Deissmann has given us an illustration of our word used for a collection for religious purposes. He has reproduced a Theban ostracan of August 4, 68, A.D. the translation of which I will give in order that we may get the full force of this word used as it is here.

"Psenamunis, the son of Pecysis, priest of Isis, to the homologos<sup>2</sup> Pibuchis, the son of Pateesis, greeting. I have received from thee 4 drachmae 1 obol, being the collection (*τὴν λογίαν*) of Isis on behalf of the public works. In the year nine of Nero the lord, Mesore 11th."<sup>3</sup>

1. *Oxy.*, II, 239.

2. *Homologos* is a technical term for a working laborer working under a contract. (cf. the labourers in the vineyard, Mt.20 and I Cor.9:7). Deissmann, *LAE*, p.106, N.14.

3. Deissmann, *LAE*, p.105.



We now have enough examples of the use of the word here under consideration to make plain the fact that not only was the word a part of the vernacular, but that it was used by other religions than Christianity to refer to religious collections, while at the same time it could also refer to irregular collections as opposed to taxes. It was used in business, government and religion, and the illustrations given above by no~~x~~ means exhaust the number that it is possible to bring.

I mentioned the fact that the derivation of this word was also misunderstood. Deissmann indicated that the theory had been advanced that λογεία had been derived from λέγω, but at the time he gave as his own opinion that such a derivation was impossible.<sup>1</sup> He stated at the time that he believed the word to be derived from the verb λογεύω to collect. He had found this verb used in a number of Papyri and inscriptions. He also mentioned a theory put forward as late as 1897 by Linke<sup>2</sup> to the effect that the "great logia" in the field of St. Paul's missionary labours was not a collection of money but a determination of the forms of doctrine and liturgical formulations that had arisen within the churches through special gifts of the Spirit. Linke thought that St. Paul wished to obtain the results of the thought

1. Bible Studies, p. 143.

2. See LAE, p. 105, n. 3.





and prayer, revocations and spiritual hymns of each single church in the course of an ecclesiastical year. But we can easily see that the common usage of the day would leave no room for such an interpretation as that. Deissmann now asserts that the etymology of *λογεῖα* is definitely ascertained, and that his earlier belief to the effect that it came from *λογεῖω*, "I collect," is substantiated.<sup>1</sup>

vii. *καθαρίζω*, to make clean, to cleanse. The appearances of this word in the New Testament are too numerous for quoting here. It is not confined to any one writer, nor to any one sort of usage, but may mean to make clean from physical stains and dirt,<sup>2</sup> to cleanse by curing,<sup>3</sup> to free from the defilement of sin,<sup>4</sup> to consecrate or dedicate,<sup>5</sup> or to cleanse in other ways. It appears in the list of "Biblical" words, and therefore we will now turn to the evidence from the documents of that period.

Deissmann has shown that there is a passage of Josephus which uses our word, *ἐκαθάριζε τὴν περὶ ταῦτα συνήθειαν*, and there is also an occurrence of the word in the Inscriptions in a ceremonial sense. This is an Inscription made in 93 or 91 B.C., and is designated "the Mystery-Inscription of Andania in the Peloponnesus" and prescribes in line 37: *ἀναγραφέντων δὲ καὶ ἀφ' ἑν*

1. *ibid.*, p. 105.

2. Mt. 23:25; Lk. 11:39; Mk. 7:19.

3. Mt. 8:2sq.; 10:8; Mk. 1:40-42.

4. II Cor. 7:1; Ac. 15:9.

5. Heb. 9:22, 23.



καθαρίζειν καὶ ἃ τῇ δεξ' ἔχοντας εἰσπορεύεσθαι.<sup>1</sup>

These two illustrations would be enough to show us that the word was not confined to Biblical usage, but we have further light from the Papyri. Moulton and Milligan tell us that among the Papyri in the British Museum the word is used in connection with plants, while in a collection at Leipzig it is used with reference to the "cleansing" (καθαρίζοντος) of wheat.<sup>2</sup> I regret that these sources are not at my disposal.

viii. ποταμοφόρητος, carried away by a stream.

The only occurrence of this word in the New Testament is in the Apocalypse of John. "And the serpent cast out of his mouth after the woman water as a river, that he might cause her to be carried away by the stream (ποταμοφόρητον)."<sup>3</sup>

The comment in Thayer's Lexicon "Besides only in Hesychius" suggests that this word must have been coined by John.

The fact of the matter is that it occurs as early as B.C. 110, with another reference being given for the date

A.D. 78. "if any part of the land becomes unwatered or is carried off by the river (ποταμοφόρητος)." Two references are given for the second century.<sup>4</sup>

ix. ἐναντι, before. It is used three times in the New Testament, once in Luke, and twice in Acts.

"Now it came to pass, while he executed the priest's office before God (ἐναντι τοῦ Θεοῦ) in the order of his course,"<sup>5</sup>

1. Bible Studies, p. 216.

2. VGT, Part IV, καθαρίζω

3. Rev. 12:15.

4. VGT, Part VI, ποταμοφόρητος

5. Lk. 1:8.



The next time the word appears it is in Stephen's defense: "and delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favor and wisdom before Pharoah king of Egypt (ἐναντίον Φαραὼ βασιλέως Αἰγύπτου)." <sup>1</sup> Finally, it appears in Peter's rebuke of Simon the Sorcerer. "Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right before God (ἐναντί τῷ θεῷ)." <sup>2</sup> In Thayer's Lexicon we find the statement, "Very often in the Septuagint, and in the Palestinian Apocrypha of the Old Testament; but nowhere in profane authorities." That statement is sufficient grounds for our turning to the "profane" sources in order to see whether or not new light has been shed upon the problem.

In The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament <sup>3</sup> we find that "ἐναντί with the genitive...can no longer be confined to biblical Greek." This is proved by its occurrence in the translation of a Roman senator's "Consultum," ΠΕΡΙ ΤΟΥΤΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΠΡΑΓΜΑΤΟΣ ὕστερον ἐναντί ΤΑΙΟΥ ΛΟΚΡΕΤΙΟΥ ΒΟΥΛΕΥΣΑΘΑΙ ἔδοξεν. The date of this is B.C. 170. For imperial times we have a quotation from Oxyrhynchus. It is in a much mutilated will from somewhere between A.D. 181 and 189, the testator being Petosorapis. Too many words are missing to be able to give the context, but in it occur these words: ἐναντί τέλα. <sup>4</sup> "Wackernagel

1. Ac. 7:10.

2. Ac. 8:21.

3. VGT, Part III, ἐναντί

4. P Oxy 495:5.



Hellenistica, pp. 1ff. shows that the word came into the *Kourḗ* about B.C.300 from Cretan, Delphian, or a like dialect, helped by the fact that the Attic *ἐναντίον* had this sense."<sup>1</sup>

x. *ἄλλογενής*, spring from another race, a foreigner, alien. The word, which is frequent in the Septuagint, occurs only once in the New Testament, and that time in Luke. "Were there none found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger (*ἄλλογενής*)?"<sup>2</sup> It occurs "nowhere in profane writings" according to Thayer's Lexicon. Deissmann, in commenting on this says, "The Roman authorities, however, in placing inscriptions on the marble barriers of the inner courts of the Temple at Jerusalem, thought differently of the word, or they would not have employed it in a notice intended to be read by Gentiles, who were thereby threatened with death as the penalty for entering. One of these inscriptions was discovered by Clermont-Ganneau in 1871. The stone on which it is cut--a substantial block, on which the eyes of Jesus and St. Paul may often have rested--is now in the Imperial New Museum at Constantinople."<sup>3</sup> The following is Deissmann's translation of the inscription.

"Let no foreigner enter within the screen and enclosure surrounding the sanctuary. Whosoever is taken so doing will be the cause that death overtaketh him."<sup>3</sup>

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1. VGT, *ibid.*

2. Lk. 17:18.

3. LAE, p.79,80.





The word translated "foreigner" in the above is ἄλλογενής.  
 "Mommesen argued that the inscription was cut by the Romans. We might readily allow the word to be a Jewish coinage, without compromising the principle that Jewish Greek was essentially one with vernacular Greek elsewhere. The word is correctly formed, and local coined words must be expected in every language that is spoken over a wide area."<sup>1</sup> Deissmann's view is similar, "If we suppose the warning notice owed its phrasing to the Jewish authorities, that would prove nothing against the view I have taken of this word. There is nothing whatever specifically Jewish about it either in sense or form."<sup>2</sup>

We have now considered ten words, all of which have been designated as being peculiar to the Bible and ecclesiastical writings. As they are examined in the light which the non-literary memorials shed upon them, we see that it is necessary to scratch them, one by one, from the list of "Biblical" words. Many more words could be shown to have been affected in the same manner. But for the purposes of this study, enough have been presented. The ten words studied illustrate the process to which great numbers of such words have been subjected, and the reasons for concluding that very few "Biblical" words will remain when the facts are all assembled.

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1. VGT, Part I, ἄλλογενής  
 2. LAE, p.81.



### III. SELECTIONS WHICH IMPLICATE THE POPULAR CHARACTER OF THE NEW TESTAMENT LANGUAGE.

When the non-literary memorials have shown us that the long list of words called "Biblical" words cannot stand in the light which, strange to say, has been largely shed from Egyptian rubbish heaps; they have by no means done all that they can do for us. The fact that these words have been proven to be a part of the vernacular leads us to wonder whether this is not true also of other words: words which were not placed in the "Biblical" list, but which nevertheless were not understood to be a part of the everyday language of ordinary people.

A further study of the vocabulary of the New Testament in comparison with the vocabulary which is found on these bits of papyrus and pieces of broken pottery leads to a confirmation of this surmise. When these words were known only from the classics, although we might understand how to properly define most of them, still we could not fully appreciate them. It was impossible to disassociate them from the unnatural style and formal atmosphere of their extra-biblical setting as it was then known. But now we know differently. We know that these words are alive, and that in many cases they are

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the free expression of deep emotions. More than that, we know that to a great extent these were words which were in daily use by the common people. They would understand them, perhaps better than many later scholars, who have used them for the building of some fearful and wonderful systems of theology.

What we want to consider here, is not what the non-literary memorials have taught us concerning the true meanings of many of these words, for that will be considered in the next section, but we will now consider the fact that the sight of our well known New Testament words in their first century setting gives us an entirely new appreciation of the character of the New Testament. It imparts a fresh life and a new reality to these words as we trace their usage in the ordinary Greek of the day and it seems to bring the New Testament closer to the people of today as we are led to a fuller appreciation of the fact that it is not simply a book for the higher classes, but for all mankind. In order to realize this better we will now examine certain New Testament words in the light of the non-literary sources.

1. Παρουσία, presence, coming, arrival, advent.

"In the New Testament especially of the advent, i.e. the future, visible, return from heaven of Jesus, the Messiah, to raise the dead, hold the last judgment, and set up form-

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ally and gloriously the kingdom of God."<sup>1</sup> Of the many instances of the use of this word in the New Testament, I will only cite a few. There is a very evident example of the use of the word to mean "presence" in II Corinthians. "For, His letters, they say, are weighty and strong; but his bodily presence (*παρουσία*) is weak, and his speech of no account."<sup>2</sup> It also probably means the same in the following: "And I rejoice at the coming (*παρουσία*) of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus: for that which was lacking on your part they supplied."<sup>3</sup> The present tense of "rejoice" and the past tense of "supplied" would seem to demand that *παρουσία* be here translated "presence" rather than "coming".

There are so many examples of the use of the word in the sense of "coming" or "advent" that one can hardly tell which ones to choose by way of illustration. One or two will suffice, at any rate, since this usage is well known. "And as he sat on the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto <sup>him</sup> privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming (*παρουσίας*) and of the end of the world?"<sup>4</sup> The word is used in this sense four times in the twenty fourth chapter of Mathew, and many times elsewhere in the New Testament. Paul uses the word many times and in different ways, but particularly in the sense that Mathew uses it.

1. Trayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, 20.

*παρουσία*.

2. II Cor. 10:10.

3. I Cor. 16:17.

4. Mt. 24:3.





In passing it is interesting to note that the word does not occur at all in the Apocalypse of John, which is just the place in which we would rather expect to find it used most freely. Neither does it appear in either Mark or Luke in any sort of usage. We are not so surprised to learn that the Fourth Gospel does not use it, but on the other hand, the following use is made of it in I John. "And now, my little children, abide in him; that, if he shall be manifested, we may have boldness, and not be ashamed before him at his coming (παρουσία)<sup>1</sup>." One might compare that with I John 4:17<sup>2</sup> as an interesting point bearing on the apocalypticism of the writer, whom so many believe to be the author of the Fourth Gospel.

Of course there is much of interest to study in connection with the use which the various writers of the New Testament books make of this word, but at present we are more interested in seeing what use was made of it by people living in or near that period, but in no wise connected with our New Testament. We have seen that the word is sometimes used to mean "presence" in the New Testament, and now from Oxyrhynchus we have two examples of such usage.

The first one, dated A.D. 131, is a petition from a lady named Dionysia to the epistrategus, and concerns her dealings with one Sarapion son of Pnesitheus.

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1. I Jn. 2:28.

2. "Herein is love made perfect with us, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as he is, even so are we in this world."



She had bought a vineyard and some corn-land from his father, paying the price partly to his father and partly to a creditor of his father. At least that is her claim, while Sarapion claimed that she held the land only on mortgage, and also claimed that her mother was guilty of poisoning someone. She took the case to Claudius Quintianus who was epistrategus at that time, and he referred it to the praefect. She continues her petition, which is to Julius Varianus (who evidently is now the epistrategus in place of Claudius Quintianus), as follows: "Thereupon I attended at the praefect's court, and when my opponent paid no attention and failed to appear I presented his highness the praefect with a petition, of which I have appended a copy, narrating in full the state of the affair; and he sent me on to you, my lord, to have the case tried. Since my opponent even now is absent and the time for sowing is imminent and the repair of what has been swept away by the river requires my presence (ΧΡΗΪΕC ΚΟΚ ΤΗΣ ΠΑΡΟΥΣΙΑ[5]), I beg you, to permit me to sail back and have the case decided by you on the spot, that I may obtain redress. Farewell."<sup>1</sup> There follows then a copy of the petition which had been present<sup>ed</sup> to the praefect.

Here we see our word used in a matter of fact way, and in a letter relating to a business matter. It is a matter very vital to Dionysia, who is concerned over



the next seasons crop, on which perhaps her living depends, and as she speaks of the situation demanding her *παρουσία* she little realizes how interesting that word will appear to people who read it some two thousand years later.

The second example from Oxyrhynchus is a letter written by Charmus to his brothers, but evidently primarily addressed to one of the brothers named Sopatrus. The letter was written some time during the third century, and on the back of a piece of papyrus containing a taxing-list. Certainly this letter was not written for publication, and thus it lifts the curtain and gives us a little glimpse of life in that day. In that glimpse we see our word, perfectly at home, among the prosaic surroundings of every day life. As my desire is simply to show how these words appear as they are used by the ordinary folk of the period, I shall quote the entire letter.

"Charmus to his brothers, very many greetings. First of all I pray for your security.<sup>1</sup> I had a meeting with Skoru respecting the workshops, and formerly he said 'Either give me 12 artabae or take 12 art.', as I told you in a previous letter; but now he said to me 'We have given the workmen one and a half as much.' I accordingly would not make an agreement with him about this before telling you. For he said to me that the workmen had not agreed

<sup>1</sup>This seems to have a New Testament ring to it. Note especially Phil.1:3; Col.1:3. It is clearly the custom of the day to open letters in such a manner, and not peculiar to the New Testament.



even on these terms, since the value of the corn is small. The praefect has sent an amnesty here, and there is no longer any fear at all; so if you will, come boldly; for we are no longer able to stay indoors. For Annoe is much worn out with her journey, and we await your presence, (τὴν ὑμῶν παρουσίαν ἐχόμεθα) that we may not withdraw without reason; for she considers herself to be keeping house here alone. Heraclea and her mother salute you. We salute the children. I pray for your and their health and prosperity."

The address reads: "Deliver to Sopatrus from his brother."<sup>1</sup> There are other examples of this use of the word, some of them very interesting, but we must not spend too much time here.

Deissmann tells us that from the Ptolemaic period down into the 2nd century A.D. we are able to trace the word in the East as a technical expression for the arrival or the visit of the king or the emperor. He goes on to say, "The parusia of the sovereign must have been something well known even to the people, as shown by the facts that special payments in kind and taxes to defray the cost of the parusia were exacted, that in Greece a new era was reckoned from the parusia of the Emperor Hadrian, that all over the world advent-coins were struck after a parusia of the emperor, and that we are even able

<sup>1</sup> I. P. Oxy. XIV, 1058.





to quote examples of advent-sacrifices."<sup>1</sup>

There is a notice from the third century B.C. which mentions contributions for a "crown" (στεφάνου) which is to be present<sup>ed</sup> to the King on his "arrival" (παρουσίας), while a certain Appenneus writes, in a letter of B.C. 264 or 227, that he has prepared for the "visit" (παρουσία) of Chrysippus by laying in a number of birds for his consumption. Another example from the Papyri is where the Serapeum Twins lay their grievances before King Ptolemy Philometor and Queen Cleopatra on the occasion of their royal "visits" (παρουσίας) to Memphis.<sup>2</sup>

The following petition from the Tebtunis Papyrus was written about B.C. 113, and we see our word used again in connection with the "visit" (παρουσία) of the King. "To Menches, komogrammateus of Kerkeosiris, from Horus, komarch, and the elders of the cultivators of the said village. We signed an undertaking to Polemon the toparch that we would supply to the Treasury by the 10th of Pachon 1500 artabae of wheat, and we have been working night and day to make up the aforesaid amount and also the 80 artabae of wheat for the supplies imposed in connection with the king's visit (παρουσίαν). On the 3rd of the month mentioned below while we were engaged in the receipt of the rents and the threshing expenses, Lycus proceeded to the threshing-floor with other persons, armed, and drawing

1. Deissmann, LAE, p. 368.

2. VGT, Part VI, παρουσία



their swords they seized one of us, Horus the komarch, making a violent attempt to carry him off, so that he threw away his garment and took to flight, and we together with the rest of the cultivators having had our suspicions aroused ran off with him; for which reason we were hindered with regard to the receipt of the rents and other imposts. On the 4th we forced Lycus and his companions to appear before the....."<sup>1</sup> The petition breaks off here, so we cannot know what happened after that, but we have enough to know that they were expecting a parusia of the king. It is interesting to note that the above petition was found among the wrappings of the mummy of a sacred crocodile.<sup>2</sup>

We have now given enough attention to this word, and by this study we can get a clearer conception of what the parusia of Christ meant to the early Christians. They had seen the pomp with which the earthly kings came. They looked for their King to come with a much greater glory. "Even in early Christian times the parallelism between the parusia of the representative of the State and the parusia of Christ was clearly felt by the Christians themselves."<sup>3</sup> Thus we see that this significant word of the New Testament writings was a word from the vocabulary of the common people.

1. Tebtunis Papyri, I, 48.

2. LAE, p. 539.

3. Ibid., p. 372.



ii. *σῶμα*, the body both of men and animals; a dead body, or corpse; the living body; bodies of plants; a social body of men; a slave. The word appears many times in the New Testament, and I will merely give an illustration of the various uses of the word which have been indicated in the above definition. In the Epistle of James we find the word used to designate the bodies of living animals. "Now if we put the horses' bridles into their mouths that they may obey us, we turn about their whole body (*ὅλον τὸ σῶμα αὐτῶν*) also."<sup>1</sup> The verse preceding the one just quoted gives us an example of the word used to designate the living body of man. "If any stumbleth not in word, the same is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body (*ὅλον τὸ σῶμα*) also."

An illustration of the use of the word to designate the dead body--a corpse-- is found in Mark.

"There came Joseph of Arimathea, a councillor of honorable estate, who also himself was looking for the kingdom of God; and he boldly went in unto Pilate, and asked for the body (*τὸ σῶμα*) of Jesus."<sup>2</sup> Paul uses the word to designate the body of a plant in I Corinthians. "And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not the body (*τὸ σῶμα*) that shall be, but a bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other kind."<sup>3</sup> We find the body referred to as a social group in the Epistle to the Romans. "So we, who are many,

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1. Jas. 3:3.

2. Matt. 27:58.

3. I Cor. 15:37.



are one body (*ἐν σῶμα*) in Christ, and severally members one of another."<sup>1</sup> There is just one place in the New Testament where this word is used to refer to slaves, and this is in the Apocalypse of John. The quotation follows: "And cinnamon, and spice, and incense, and ointment, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and cattle, and sheep; and merchandise of horses and chariots and slaves (*καὶ σῶματα*); and souls of men."<sup>2</sup>

We have ample evidence of the fact that this word was part of the everyday vocabulary of the people of the first century, and that they used it in very much the same way that the New Testament writers used it, with a few possible exceptions. Let us see then, what some of the evidence is which shows that *σῶμα* was a part of the language of the common people.

First of all, Boulton and Milligan assure us that there are many examples in the papyri of the use of *σῶμα* to designate a living body.<sup>3</sup> A list of these examples is given under their discussion of the word, but none of the really significant examples can be reproduced here, due to the fact that they are all found in collections of papyri which are not accessible to me. There are later examples of a Christian use of this word, which, although they may be very interesting, nevertheless are not particularly

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1. Rom. 12:5.

2. Rev. 18:13.

3. VGT, Part VII, *σῶμα*





significant as a means of showing the popular character of the New Testament language. It is very reasonable for anyone to say that this late Christian usage is due to the influence of the New Testament. So, although I might here give some interesting examples of Christian usage of the word, I shall not do so. The examples to which Moulton and Milligan refer are more convincing, some being as early as B.C.257.

I am able, however, to give an example of the use of the word to refer to a corpse, which does not seem likely to have been influenced by the New Testament as it is fairly early (A.D. 137) and there is nothing to indicate that it was written by a Christian. It is the report of a public physician to the effect that he had investigated the cause of a death which had been reported and had found the body "hanged by a noose." Here we see the word in use as a part of the "working vocabulary" of the people.

"To Claudianus, strategus, from Dionysus, son of Apollodorus, son of Dionysius, of Oxyrhynchus, public physician. I was today instructed by you, through Heraclides your assistant, to inspect the body<sup>(σῶμα)</sup> of a man who had been found hanged, named Hierax, and to report to you my opinion upon it. I therefore inspected the body in the presence of the aforesaid Heraclides at the house of Ep-



agathus, son....merus, son of Sarapion, in the Broad Street quarter, and found it hanged by a noose, which fact I accordingly report."<sup>1</sup>

There are other interesting examples of the use of *σῶμα* to mean a corpse<sup>2</sup> but it is not necessary that they be cited here. The most interesting examples, from the point of view of this study, are those where we see *σώματα* used to refer to "slaves", as in Rev.18:13 quoted above.<sup>3</sup> It is used frequently in this way in the Septuagint<sup>4</sup> and now there are many examples known in the Papyri. I will give three of these examples here, the third being a case where the diminutive *σωμάτιον* is used. The first example is from the Hibeh Papyri, its date being B.C.245.

"Demophon to Ptolemaeus, greeting. Make every effort to send me the flute-player Petous with both the Phrygian flutes and the rest; and if any expense is necessary, pay it, and you shall recover it from me. Send me also Zenobius the effeminate with a drum and cymbals and castanets, for he is wanted by the women for the sacrifice; and let him wear as fine clothes as possible. Get the kid also from Aristion and send it to me; and if you have arrested the slave (τὸ σῶμα), deliver him to Semptheus to bring to me. Send me as many cheeses as you can, a new jar, vegetables of all kinds, and some delicacies if you

1. P. Oxy. I, 51.

2. VGT, Part VII, *σῶμα*

3. See page 60.

4. See Thayer's Lexicon, *σῶμα*, l., c.



have any. Goodbye. Put them on board with the guards who will assist in bringing the boat."<sup>1</sup> It is hardly necessary to point out the fact that this use of our word in this very evidently non-literary letter, is striking proof that the idea of *σώματα* as slaves was well known by the masses.

The second example of such a usage comes from Oxyrhynchus. It is used in a Will of the early second century A.D. While the beginning of the Will is lost, and the remaining part is too long to be quoted in full, enough can be quoted to get the significance of the use of our word here. The Will is a joint deed by a husband and wife, who both have property to dispose of. The survivor of the two is designated as the heir of the other, with power to divide the whole property among the four children of the marriage. In the event of the wife outliving the husband, she is authorized to retain the ownership if she should choose to do so. The following quotation begins with the beginning of the Papyrus fragment.

"....shall have the ownership of the estates and right of domicile in the buildings, the survivor of us, if he pleases, having the power to sell all or any of the slaves (*δοῦλα σώματα*) belonging to himself or to the one of us who first dies, and with the purchase money to defray the expenses of the funeral and burial of the body and pay the debts of the deceased, and the survivor

1. Hibeh Papyri, I, 54.



of us shall similarly be permitted to devise to the children that have been born to us Sarapas and Apollonius and Diogenes and..., the last two being minors, the estates, unsold slaves (*τὰ ἄλλα τῶν σωμάτων*) and other effects belonging to himself or to the one who first dies, in such manner as the survivor thinks fit and with any division he chooses."<sup>1</sup>

It will be noted in the above example that in the first reference to slaves the expression is not *σώματα* alone, but with a defining epithet, *δοῦλα*. In the second case however, it is simply *τῶν σωμάτων*.

Our third example is found in a petition to the praefect, complaining that a certain Syrus had refused to comply with a former judgment which was given as the result of a lawsuit over a male foundling (*ἄρρενικὸν σωμάτιον*). That the foundling was a slave is made plain in this petition which is dated A.D. 49-50.<sup>2</sup>

"To Gnaeus Vergilius Capito, from Tryphon, son of Dionysius, of the city of Oxyrhynchus. Syrus, son of Syrus, entrusted to the keeping of my wife Saraeus, daughter of Apion, in the seventh year of Tiberius Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus Imperator, on my security, a boy foundling (*ἄρρενικὸν σωμάτιον*) named ..., who had been picked up from the gutter, to be nursed. The foundling (*τοῦ σωματίου*) died, and Syrus tried to carry off into

1. P. Oxy., III, 493.

2. To get the whole story it is necessary to read also P. Oxy., I, 37 where slave child is mentioned a number of times.





slavery my infant son Apion. I accordingly applied to Pasion, the strategus of the nome, by whom my son Apion was restored to me in accordance with what you, my benefactor, had commanded, and the minutes entered by Pasion. Syrus, however, refuses to comply with the judgement, and hinders me in my trade. I therefore come to you, my preserver, in order to obtain my rights. Farewell."<sup>1</sup>

These references are sufficient to be quite convincing. There are others which may be given<sup>2</sup> but lack of space forbids. The discussion of the use of this word in the vernacular would not be complete however without a reference to its use to denote the "body" of a document. Such a use is found in the collection of Fayum Papyri in an agreement concerning the collection of certain taxes in A.D.161. Near the close of the document we read: "I, Heron, the above mentioned, have written the body (*τὸ σῶμα*) of the contract and agreed to all the aforesaid."<sup>3</sup> I am not able to produce an example of the use of the word to refer to a social group as a body in accordance with one New Testament usage cited, but we at least have enough before us to make plain the fact that various uses of our word were common in the period during which our New Testament was taking form, and many of them ran parallel with the use made of the word in the New Testament.

1.P Oxy I, 38.

2. See LAE, P.323 for an inscription referring to a "female slave," *σῶμα γυναικεῖον* }

3. Fayum Towns and their Papyri, 34:20.



iii. There are two interesting words found in the New Testament which I wish to deal with together here, particularly in the light of their usage in the sixth chapter of Galatians. They are the two words translated "burden" in the second and fifth verses. In the second verse we read the following: "Bear ye one another's burdens (*βάρυ*), and so fulfill the law of Christ." The sixth verse says: "For each man shall bear his own burden (*φορτίον*)."

Due to the fact that there is an apparent contradiction here, there have been some fearful and wonderful attempts at exegesis. Of course, the principal attempt has been to show that *βάρυ* were burdens of great size, like freight, or heavy baggage, whereas the *φορτίον* was used to refer to the soldier's personal effects which he carried with him on the march--his knapsack.<sup>1</sup> But does the usage in the Papyri warrant such an interpretation? Of course our primary interest in this section is not exegesis but an illustration of the use of New Testament words in the popular vocabulary of the day. But as we note the fact that these two words for burden are in use in the Papyri, we can also see how they are used.<sup>2</sup>

When we look for *βάρος* or *βάρυ* in the Papyri, we do not get very much light. We find it in use as a

1. Cf. Lightfoot, J. E., The Epistles of St. Paul, "Galatians" (1887), p. 217.

2. So far as exegesis is concerned, a study of the New Testament usage of these two words would be enough to convince anyone that the interpretation mentioned above is eisegesis rather than exegesis. The discussion of these two words with the reff. given in Thayer's Lexicon makes this plain.



part of the vernacular, which after all is the main thing just now, but there are not enough example to make the significance of the word as clear as we might wish. We find it used to refer to a burden of oppression, of taxation, or of responsibility. Its first use in the moral sense as in Gal.6:2 is in the Acts of the Martyrdom of Christina, a production of the fifth century A.D.<sup>1</sup>

From the standpoint of an illustration of the fact that it was used in the vernacular we have an example from Oxyrhynchus. It is a letter of the second century, referring to the purchase of some fleeces which the writer was expecting his correspondent to procure on his behalf. While it does not shed much, if any, light as to the distinction between *πάρος* and *φορτίον*, it does go a long way in helping to relate the language of the New Testament to the language of the common people when we see the word used in this kind of a letter.

"Marcus to his dearest Patreas, greeting.

About the fleeces, since you offered to buy some good ones, adding that the summer ones were the best, I bade you buy them whenever they were good, and I wrote to you that they had not brought ~~any~~ to me up to Mesore, and you afterwards wrote and said you had bought some and sold them again, and...you wrote me a letter, and I was never ....; I will send you the very letter by Syrus in order

1. VGT, Part II, *πάρος*



that you may read it in a sober mood and be self-condemned. If it is troublesome (εἰ δὲ τοῦτο σοι βάρος φέρει) and you have not yet bought them, give the money to my friend Zoilus; if however you have bought them, deliver them to him under seal, in order that they may be conveyed to me. Good-bye."<sup>1</sup>

As to the word *φορτίον*, we find a number of examples of its use in the Papyri and we also get an answer to the question as to the manner in which it was used. As we shall see, there is no real ground for distinguishing the two words as has been done in an endeavor to explain the apparent contradiction in the sixth chapter of Galatians. But before coming to a final conclusion let us see some examples from the Papyri.

Among the Oxyrhynchus Papyri there is a late second century account of expenses incurred in connection with the transport of hay to the village of Ophis. Although in this case we have only the abbreviation *φο*, the Editor states that this can hardly be anything but *φο(ρτία)*. The word occurs a number of times in this account but I will give here the translation of the account for two days only.

"Account of the transport of hay transferred to the threshing-floor of Ophis in Pachon.

1.P Oxy VII, 1032.





The 18th. 9 donkeys, 8 loads (*φορτία*), making 72 trusses from 43 bundles, 24 cart-loads. Wages for 9 donkeys at 2 drachmae, 18 dr., likewise for 3 drivers at 1 dr.5 obols, 5 dr. 1 ob., likewise for another driver 2 dr.4 ob., for 2 more workmen binding trusses 3 dr. 3 ob. Total 29 dr. 1 ob.

The 19th. Likewise 12 donkeys, 8 loads (*φορτία*), making 96 trusses, 32 cart-loads. Wages for 12 donkeys at 2 dr., 24 dr., likewise for 6 drivers 1 dr. 5 ob., 10 dr. 2 ob., for 2 more workmen binding trusses 3 dr. 3 ob. Total 37 dr. 5 ob."<sup>1</sup>

In a first century letter from a father to his son we find *φορτίον* used in a way that certainly disproves the contention that it meant the smaller kind of a burden, such as the knapsack of the soldier. Most of the letter relates to clothes of various kinds. Nicanor, who is frequently mentioned, and was in the sons's company, may have been his brother. I will quote only enough of the letter to let us see its personal, and hence non-literary, nature, and its use of the word *φορτίον*.

"Apollonius to his son Apollonius, greeting.  
I have received through Heraclas the boxes with the books, as you write, and the half-chous jar of oil which Nicanor writes that he has sent. Tell Nicanor that Heraclas the boatman.....to pay us the 600 drachme for his freights  
L.P Oxy VII, 1049.



(τῶν φορτίων αὐτοῦ); he was here today; I found the boat sailing down and I thought that I ought to let you know about what I have said."<sup>1</sup>

This use of the word could hardly mean anything else but "freights," and bears out the use made of the word in Ac.27:10. In addition to these examples we find the word used elsewhere as "freight," "wares," and "merchandise."<sup>2</sup> The word is certainly a common one in the speech of the day, but there is nothing to bear out the idea that φορτίον is the diminutive of φόρτος in anything except its form. The one example cited by Lightfoot<sup>3</sup> only goes to show that the word could be used of all kinds of burdens. As Moulton and Milligan show, it is even used in a metaphorical sense: in a letter ascribed to the Emperor Hadrian the adjective φορτικόν is used with λόγον to refer to the conventional reasons of philosophy, as contrasted with a simple statement of facts.<sup>2</sup>

To sum up, we must conclude first that we have still more evidence concerning the popular character of the New Testament language. Both of these words are in frequent use in the everyday life of the people. On the other hand, there seems to be little to distinguish them, and we must accept the passage in the sixth chapter of the epistle (so-called) to the Galatians as another of the paradoxical statements which the Apostle Paul was fond of

1. P. Oxy VIII, 1153:1-12.

2. VGT, Part VIII, φορτίον

3. See note 1, p.66.



making, without the interesting but unfounded distinction that has sometimes been made. The interpretation of this passage lies in the context rather than in any universally recognized difference in the usage of the two words.

iv. *μισθός*, dues paid for work, wages, hire, reward. This is a word which is common throughout the New Testament, appearing thirty times in all. That it was a word in frequent use in the vernacular is clear from the number of times it appears in the Papyri.

In a contract dated A.D. 99, relating to the engagement of a woman named Thenetkoueis to serve for the season in an oil press, the word appears twice. "Thenetkoueis is accordingly obliged to carry at the olive-press belonging to Lucius Belenus Gemellus at Euhemeria, from whatever day he orders her, the olive produce included in the present third year, performing all that a carrier should until the completion of the entire oil-manufacture, and receiving from Lucius Belenus her daily wage (*τὸν ἡμερησίον μισθόν*) at the same rate as the carriers in the village; and Lucius shall reckon off the 16 drachmae of silver by instalments from her wages (*μισθῶν*)."<sup>1</sup> This entire contract is extremely interesting for a number of reasons, and

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1. Fayum Towns and Their Papyri, 91.



we shall have occasion to refer to it again later.

The word is used in the sense of "salary" in a contract of A.D.155 where an ex-cosmetes of Oxyrhynchus apprenticed his slave to a shorthand-writer for two years to be taught to read and write shorthand. This contract cannot be otherwise than interesting to us because it is such a clear illustration of the non-literary use of a word which appears so frequently in the New Testament. However, we have room for only a part of it here.

"Panechotes also called Panares, ex-cosmetes of Oxyrhynchus, through his friend Gemellus, to Apollonius, writer of shorthand (σημιογράφω), greeting. I have placed with you my slave Chaerammon to be taught the signs which your son Dionysius knows, for a period of two years dating from the present month Phamenoth of the 18th year of Antoninus Caesar the lord at the salary (μισθοῦ) agreed upon between us, 120 silver drachmae, not including feast-days, etc."<sup>1</sup>

In a third century "account of expenses for the corpse," or in other words, an account of expenses incurred for a burial, one item mentioned is "48 drachmae, wages (μισθοὺς) of the bearers."<sup>2</sup> These and various other appearances of the word in the Papyri<sup>3</sup> are convincing proof that it was a part of the language of the common people.

1. P Oxy IV:724.

2. Payum Towns and Their Papyri, 103:3.

3. VGT, Part V, μισθοὺς.





v. σκάλλω, to skin, flay, rend, mangle, vex, trouble, annoy. The word appears four times in the New Testament, each appearance being in the Synoptic Gospels. Once it is translated "distressed"<sup>1</sup> and the other three times it is translated "trouble".<sup>2</sup> Concerning this use of the word, Coburn wrote: "Even some slang words were used by the New Testament writers in order to give force to their statements among the 'common people.'"<sup>3</sup> When we examine the non-literary memorials, we discover that this usage was the common usage of the day. The original and literal meaning of the word, "flay," "skin," has almost completely dropped from sight. The Papyri use it to mean "distress," "harass," "worry," "trouble."<sup>4</sup> The word appears so frequently as to remove all doubt concerning its place and meaning in the vernacular. We may therefore add it to the growing group of words which testify to the popular character of the New Testament language.

vi. οἰκονόμος, the manager of a household, or, of household affairs; a steward, manager, superintendent; the manager of a farm, an overseer; the superintendent of the city's finances, the treasurer of the city. Here we have a word which appears ten times in the New Testament. It is used four times in the Gospel of Luke,<sup>5</sup> once in

1. Mt. 9:36.

2. Mk. 5:35; Lk. 7:6; 8:49.

3. Coburn, Unbibl., p. 110.

4. VGT, Part VII, σκάλλω.

5. Lk. 12:12; 16:1, 2, 3.



I Peter,<sup>1</sup> and the other five times in the Pauline epistles.<sup>2</sup> The Papyri give numerous illustrations of the use of the word in its literal sense of "steward," "manager of an estate."<sup>3</sup> This meaning would be quite clear to those who first read these references in the New Testament. But in Romans 16:23 we have a somewhat different meaning, namely, "treasurer," as applied to the treasurer of the city. It is therefore in line with our study to note that this meaning is common both in Ptolemaic and in Roman times, though in the later times the position lost much of its original importance. The Editors of the Tebtunis Papyri tell us that the *οἰκονόμος* who in the third century B.C. was the chief revenue official in a nome, in the second century sank to a much less prominent position.<sup>4</sup> At any rate there is nothing uncommon in the usage of the word in Romans 16:23. Of course we do have the word used in a metaphorical sense, where apostles and other Christian teachers are called *οἰκονόμοις καὶ ποιτηρέων θεοῦ*,<sup>5</sup> but the meaning would be clear to the first century readers because of their familiarity with the common meaning of *οἰκονόμος*.

vii. *φράσσω*, to fence in, block up, stop up, close up. The literal use of this word does not appear in the New Testament at all, but it occurs three times in the metaphorical sense.<sup>6</sup> It will give much greater force

1. I Pet. 4:10.

2. Rom. 16:23; I Cor. 4:1, 2; Gal. 4:2; Tit. 1:7.

3. VGT, Part V, *οἰκονόμος*

4. Tebtunis Papyri, I, 5:159, Edd. note.

5. I Cor. 4:1.

6. Rom. 3:19; II Cor. 11:10; Heb. 11:33.



to the metaphor it we see first that the word was a part of the vernacular, and observe how it was used. I have not been able to find an example of its metaphorical use in the non-literary memorials, but we do have definite evidence that the word was used in its literal sense.

In a petition which was written A.D. 190, giving an account of a theft of barley from the writer's house, and asking that an inquiry should be held and restitution made, the perfect passive participle of *φράσσω* is the first word which appears. The beginning of the petition is lost, but the opening lines of the fragment which remains are translated thus: "...they broke down a door that led into the public street and had been blocked up (*ἰσχυρῶς φραγμένον*) with bricks, probably using a log of wood as a battering ram."<sup>1</sup> Once more we are brought face to face with life in the Empire of the Caesars and we see again the evidence that the New Testament vocabulary was by no means strange to the people of that period. I greatly regret that lack of space forbids my giving here this whole petition, in order that the setting might seem more real to us. There is nothing "literary" about it, and this one example of the use of *φράσσω* in the papyri helps us to feel a new interest in the word.

viii. *πρεσβεύω*, to be **elder**, prior by birth or in age, to be an **ambassador**, act as an ambassador. The

1. Oxy I, 39.



word appears twice in the New Testament, its first appearance being in II Corinthians. "We are ambassadors (ΠΡΕΣΒΕΥΟΜΕΝ) therefore on behalf of Christ, as though God were entreating by us: we beseech you on behalf of Christ, be ye reconciled to God."<sup>1</sup> The only other time the word is used is in Ephesians. "I am an ambassador (ΠΡΕΣΒΕΥΩ) in chains."<sup>2</sup> Deissmann states that ΠΡΕΣΒΕΥΩ was the proper term in the Greek East for the Emperor's Legate.<sup>3</sup>

In an extract from a diploma of club membership in which the Emperor Claudius acknowledged the "golden crown" which the Worshipful Gymnastic Club of Nomads had sent him on the occasion of his victorious campaign in Britain, the present participle is used. This diploma is dated at Naples in Italy at the 49th performance of the Augustan games, September 22nd, A.D. 194. The Emperor's acknowledgement follows:

"I received with pleasure the golden crown which was sent to me by you on the occasion of my victory over the Britons, as an expression of your loyal devotion towards me. The ambassadors (ὡς ΠΡΕΣΒΕΥΟΝΤΕΣ) were---" and there follows a list of the names of the ambassadors.<sup>4</sup> David Magie has listed other examples of the use of the word in this sense.<sup>5</sup>

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1. II Cor. 5:20.

2. Eph. 6:20.

3. DAE, p. 374.

4. Milligan, George, Selected Inscriptions from Roman Britain, 1907.

5. VGT, Part VI, ΠΡΕΣΒΕΥΩ.





ix. *πρεσβύτερος*, elder, referring to age, or, a term of rank or office. The word appears very frequently in the New Testament, sometimes designating age and sometimes rank or office. It is used in both ways in the Papyri also. There is an illustration of its use in the literal sense of the elder of two in a letter from a certain Diogenes to his brother Dionysius. Diogenes is asking for assistance with regard to the measurement of certain unirrigated land, and for the payment of the dues upon it. The letter was probably written in the B.C. 22. In one place Diogenes says: "I therefore beg that you will interview Ptolemaeus, both you and your brother Apollonius, until you effect this for me, for you are superior to Ptolemaeus in experience, and if it is necessary to meet the other Ptolemaeus, the elder (*πρεσβύτερος*) brother of Ptolemaeus, about this, that he may meet him and do his best until it is effected."<sup>1</sup>

With reference to the use of *πρεσβύτερος* in the Jewish or Christian Church it is interesting to note that "the word was already familiar in Egypt as an honorific title with reference to certain village or communal officers. These varied in number according to the size of the villages, while their duties were of the most varied kind. Sometimes they were to help in the maintenance of order and sometimes in the collection of corn required in connec-

1. P. Oxy VII, 1061:10-17.

2. VGT, Part VI, πρεσβύτερος.



tion with a parusia of a ruler. They were appealed to in connection with the rent of land, the issuing of public notices, the lease of pasturage, the payments of barley for military purposes, and questions of taxation. There is an interesting petition, dated A.D. 114 which seems to contain a reference to this office.

"To Sarapion strategus in the division of Heracleides of the Arsinoite nome from Tarmuthis, the daughter of Phimon, vegetable-seller, belonging to the village of Bacchias, at present without a guardian. On the 4th of the current month Pharmouthi, Taorsenouphis, the wife of Ammonius, also called Phimon, ~~elder~~ of the village (ΠΡΕΣΒΥΤΕΡΟΥ ΚΩΗΣ) of Bacchias, although she had absolutely no ground of complaint against me, came into my house and picked a senseless quarrel against me. Not only did she strip off my tunic and mantle, but also robbed me in the quarrel of the sum which I had lying by me from the price of the vegetables I had sold, namely 16 drachmas. And on the 5th of the same month there came this woman's husband Ammonius, also called Phimon, into my house as if seeking my husband. Seizing my lamp, he went up into my house, and stole and carried off a pair of bracelets of unstamped silver of the weight of 40 drachmas, my husband being at the time away from home. I beg therefore that you will cause the accused to be brought before

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you for fitting punishment. May good fortune attend you.

"Tarmuthis about 30 years old, a mark on the right foot."

"

"The 17th year of the Emperor Caesar Nerva Trajanus Augustus Germanicus Dacicus. Pharmouthi 6."<sup>1</sup>

"We still find  $\omicron\acute{\varsigma}$   $\pi\rho\epsilon\sigma\beta\acute{\alpha}\tau\epsilon\rho\omicron\varsigma$  in the 2nd century A.D.

as Egyptian village-magistrates, of whom a certain council of three men,  $\omicron\acute{\varsigma}$   $\tau\rho\epsilon\tau\varsigma$ , appears to have occupied a special position."<sup>2</sup> Deissmann has shown that "the In-

scriptions of Asia Minor prove beyond doubt that  $\pi\rho\epsilon\sigma\beta\acute{\alpha}\tau\epsilon\rho\omicron\varsigma$  was the technical term, in the most diverse localities, for the members of a corporation."<sup>3</sup>

There is a still closer parallel to the Biblical usage in the following:

"Copy. To Hierax strategus and Timagenes royal scribe of the Arsinoit nome, district of Heraclides, from Pacysis son of Satabus and Panupis son of Tesenuphis and Panephremmis son of Stotoetis, the five elder-priests ( $\tau\omega\nu$   $\epsilon$   $\pi\rho\epsilon\sigma\beta\acute{\alpha}\tau\epsilon\rho\omega\nu$   $\xi\epsilon\rho\acute{\epsilon}\omega\nu$ ) of the five tribes of the god Socnopaeus in the present 23rd year. With regard to the matter handed over to us for examination from the acts of the idiologos' administration volume 3, sheet 3, by which it is shown with regard to Panephremmis, son of Horus, our fellow-priest, who has been informed against by Paseis, son of Nilus, on the charge of letting his hair grow too

1. Milligan, Selections From The Greek Papyri, p.74.

2. Deissmann, Bible Studies, p.155.

3. Ibid, p.156.



long and of wearing woollen garments, to your inquiries whether these things are so we report on oath by the fortune of the Emperor Caesar Titus Aelius Hadrianus Antoninus Augustus Pius..."<sup>1</sup> and here the report breaks off, so we may never know whether or not Panephremis, son of Horus, was really guilty or not.

Of this passage Deissmann says: "What is of importance for the history of the word is the circumstance that it was used as a distinctive appellation of priests in particular. The transformation of the early Christian elders into Catholic priests,....was of course facilitated by the fact that there already existed elder priests or priestly elders, of whom both the designation and the institution were but waiting for admission into a church which was gradually becoming secularised."<sup>2</sup>

κ. ὀστερέω, to be behind, come late, be left behind in the race; to be inferior; to be in want of, lack; to be devoid of; to lack in excellence, worth. The word is used by the New Testament in all the various meanings indicated in this definition. Altogether it appears fifteen or sixteen times.<sup>3</sup> The word is quite common in the Papyri and we will now notice some of the ways in which it is used.

On the verso of a late third century account

1. Milligan, Ibid., p. 83.

2. Deissmann, Bible Studies, p. 235.

3. There is some doubt as to its place in the original text of Jn. 2:3. Its other appearances are:- Mt. 19:20; Mk. 10:21; Lk. 15:14; 22:35; Rom. 3:23; I Cor. 1:7; 8:8; 12:24; II Cor. 11:5; 11:8; 12:11; 13:11; 13:12; 13:13; 13:14; 13:15.





there is a letter, in the same hand as the account, though not forming a part of it. Here is a translation of the letter. "Saras and Eudaemon to Diogenes the younger, greeting. We have been advised by the most notable Ammonion to send for a ferry-boat on account of the uncertainty of the road. We accordingly send you this message, in order that, if they consent to send while you are there, you may procure what is necessary, and if not, that you may despatch a report to the strategus and the guardians of the peace. You know what hospitality requires, so get a little...from the priests and buy some incense and....We hear that you have been two days at Heracleopolis. Make haste back to look after your charge, when you have obtained what you went for. It is no use if a person comes too late (*ὑστεργάτων*) for what required his presence (*παρουσία*). Ammonas and Dioscorus the cooks have gone to the Oxyrhynchite nome on the understanding that they would return at once. As they are delaying, and right be wanted, please send them off immediately."<sup>1</sup> Not only does *ὑστερέω* occur in this letter, but here also is *παρουσία*, which we have already studied.

In a letter dated B.C.261, a form of *ὑστερέω* is used to mean "come short." "Callicles to Harimouthes, greeting. Give orders for the sesame at Iela to be measured out to Protomachus and the sitologus, for there is no sesame



at the city. Take care then that the oil-presses do not fall short ( $\acute{\alpha}\sigma\tau\epsilon\rho\eta$ ), lest you be blamed; and send me the oil-makers. Good-bye."<sup>1</sup>

There is another letter dated about B.C.265 which uses the word with about the same meaning. The purpose of the letter, the first part of which is missing, was to secure the immediate delivery to a certain Paris of 80 artabae of aracus, in part-payment of a debt of 100 artabae of wheat. The writer proposed to obtain the remainder by purchase from the State. He closed the letter by saying: "I wish to purchase the remainder of the corn from the State, in order that there may be no arrears ( $\acute{\alpha}\sigma\tau\epsilon\rho\eta\sigma\eta\varsigma$ ) against me. Goodbye."<sup>2</sup>

In a letter dated between A.D.117 and 138, the word seems to be used in a manner somewhat similar to that in ~~Matt~~ Matthew 19:20, "What lack I yet ( $\tau\acute{\iota}\ \acute{\epsilon}\tau\epsilon\ \acute{\alpha}\sigma\tau\epsilon\rho\acute{\iota}\varsigma$ )?"<sup>3</sup> The main difference is that one is speaking of a material lack and the other of a spiritual lack. The letter is from a son to his mother concerning the dispatch of oil and other articles. Near the close of the letter he says: "I sent my brother Apollonius some wool to be dyed, since I want ( $\acute{\alpha}\sigma\tau\epsilon\rho\acute{\iota}\varsigma$ ) two quarters(?) and they have not been prompt in bringing it(?) because the days are...."<sup>4</sup>

Ten words have now been considered in connection

1. Hibeh Papyri, I, 43.

2. Ibid., I, 65:29.

3. The word has the same import in its other appearances in the Synoptic Gospels. Sometimes in the spiritual and sometimes the material sense, but always with the idea of a "lack."

4. P Oxy X, 1293:24.



with their use in the period approximating that of the formation of our New Testament. The number of words studied is not in itself sufficient to be convincing, but our study of these words in their natural background should be sufficient to enable us to see from what sort of background the New Testament vocabulary came. I have taken up considerable space with quotations from the Papyri in the belief that only by catching the spirit of these communications could we fully appreciate the significance attached to the appearance of our New Testament words in them. What has been done with these ten could be done with hundreds more, as even a most superficial study of the eight volumes edited by Moulton and Milligan<sup>1</sup> will show. The purposes of this paper will not permit us to follow this phase of the subject farther; but when we add the testimony of the ten words just studied to that of the ten words once considered "Biblical" words but now known to be a part of the language of the common people, we have some very definite evidence, which only a more exhaustive study of the subject can complete.

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1. VGT, Parts I-VIII.



IV. WORDS OR EXPRESSIONS WHOSE MEANINGS HAVE BEEN MORE  
CLEARLY DEFINED BY THEIR USE IN THE  
NON-LITERARY MEMORIALS.

There are many words in the Greek New Testament which have been more or less misunderstood, and consequently not properly appreciated, through all the years since the knowledge of the true character of the New Testament language was lost. The discovery of the texts from the world contemporary with the New Testament, and the subsequent discovery of their value to the student of the New Testament have brought us new light upon the true meaning of many of these words. No doubt as the discoveries of new texts from this period go forward more and more light will be shed upon this problem, but we already have enough information in this direction to bring about the need of a new Lexicon of the New Testament.<sup>1</sup>

We have already seen definite proof that the list of words thought to have been created by early Christianity must be very greatly revised. On the other hand, it is undoubtedly true that new meanings were created for a number of words already known. But even here the facts have been greatly exaggerated.<sup>2</sup> A study of the non-lit-

1. The publishing of the Vocabulary of the New Testament by Moulton and Milligan is ample proof of this statement.  
 2. Cf. LAE, p.107.





erary memorials shows that many words which previously seemed to be used with a unique meaning in the New Testament were in reality used in accordance with the common usage of the day. Some of these words will be studied in this section, in order that we may see some of the proof for this statement.

The words thought to have "Biblical" or "New Testament" meanings are not the only ones which have often been misunderstood. Through failure to understand some of the customs of that day, statements which were quite clear to the people who first read the Christian writings, have either not been fully appreciated or have been misinterpreted by later exegetes. In some cases we have guessed correctly the meaning of certain words, but could not be sure of the accuracy of our interpretation. Now, from scraps of papyrus, and bits of broken pottery, or from some long forgotten inscription, we are receiving light which corrects us in many places where we were wrong and assures us where before we could only surmise. A few examples of this will also be given in the pages that follow.

i. ἀδελφός, a brother. The word is very common in the New Testament and is used in various ways. In its literal sense it is also common in the Papyri. But it was once thought that the use of this word to denote the mem-

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bers of a community was peculiar to Biblical and ecclesiastical writings.<sup>1</sup> Deissmann has pointed out that a similar employment of this word is made known to us by the Papyri in the technical language of the Serapeum at Memphis, and that a similar usage is that of religious associations of the imperial period as applied to the members.<sup>2</sup> This becomes increasingly clear in the discussion of the word by the editors of the Vocabulary of the Greek Testament.<sup>3</sup> They give several illustrations of the use of the word in such a sense. Some of these illustrations are from the second century B.C., and we are forced to conclude that early Christians were not the first members of a religious group to call each other ἀδελφοί.

ii. ἀναστρέφεται, to turn one's self about, sojourn, dwell; to conduct one's self, behave one's self, live, walk. Deissmann has shown that the moral signification "behave," which appears seven times in the New Testament<sup>4</sup> need not be explained as a Hebraism. Thayer's Lexicon compares it to the Hebrew תָּשָׁב, but the illustrations from Inscriptions of Pergamus given by Deissmann,<sup>5</sup> and various other illustrations which are set forth in the Vocabulary of the Greek Testament<sup>6</sup> all go to show that it is unnecessary to postulate Semitic influence. By way of illustration I will give here the translation of one "inscription in honour of the gymnasiarch Apollodorus, the son of

1. See Thayer's list of words with "Biblical Significations."

2. Bible Studies, p. 87, 88.

3. VGT, Part I, ἀδελφοί

4. II Cor. 1:12; Eph. 2:3; I Pet. 1:17; Heb. 10:24; 13:18; 1 Thes. 5:15.

5. Bible Studies, p. 194; LAE, p. 312.

6. VGT, Part I, ἀναστρέφεται



Pyrrhus, which was on a marble pedestal in the gymnasium at Pergamum, of the Roman period (after 133 B.C.)."

"The people honored Apollodorus, the son of Pyrrhus, with a golden crown and a brazen image by reason of his virtue and good will towards them, and because of his good and glorious behaviour (ἀναστραφέναι) when he was Gymnasiarch."<sup>1</sup>

iii. λειτουργέω, to do a service, perform a work. Concerning this word Deissmann quotes Cremer as follows: "The LXX took over the word in order to designate the duties of the Priests and Levites in the sanctuary, for which its usage in profane Greek yielded no direct support, as it is only in late and in very isolated cases that even one word of this family, λειτουργός, occurs as applied to priests."<sup>2</sup> The word occurs three times in the New Testament\* and each time with reference to a service of a religious nature. Originally it meant to serve the state at one's own cost, or to render public service to the state.<sup>3</sup> But now the Papyri have made it clear that both λειτουργέω and λειτουργία were commonly used in Egypt in the ceremonial sense. "In particular, the services in the Serapeum were so designated."<sup>4</sup>

There is a petition dated B.C.163-2, stating the grievances of two girls, twins, who acted as attendants in the Serapeum and were consequently entitled to a certain

1. LAE, p.312.

2. Deissmann, Ibid. Studies, v.140.

\* Ac.13:2; Rom.15:27; Heb.10:11.

3. Mayor's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, λειτουργέω

4. Deissmann, Ibid.



allowance of oil and bread. For some reason this allowance was withheld in B.C.164-2, and we find them presenting various petitions for the restitution of their rights. Among these is the one referred to above in which they addressed themselves directly to King Ptolemy Philometer and Queen Cleopatra, on the occasion of a royal visit to Memphis. It seems that the result was, according to later reports, that the temple officers were at length stirred up to look into the matter, and the twins recovered most, if not all, of what was due them. The point of interest to us here is the fact that the twins refer to their services in the temple with a form of the word *Λειτουργεῖν*. In order that the manner of its use may be made clear, the first two sentences will be quoted here.

"To King Ptolemy and Queen Cleopatra the sister, gods Philometores, greeting. Thauos and Taous are twins, who minister (*Λειτουργοῦσιν*) in the great Serapeum at Memphis."<sup>1</sup>

iv. *διαθήκη*, a disposition, arrangement, testament or will; a compact, covenant. Here is a word the definition of which has never been clear, although it appears thirty three times in the New Testament. Some have contended that it should be translated "covenant," at least in many New Testament passages.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, Deissmann now contends that according to the evidence given by

1. Milligan, *Selections from the Papyri*, 114f.  
2. VGT Part II, *διαθήκη*





the recently discovered texts from the Mediterranean world of the first century the word should never be translated "covenant," but always "testament." He insists that St. Paul would not and did not ever think of finding in the word  $\delta\iota\alpha\theta\eta\kappa\eta$  the idea of "covenant." "To St. Paul the word meant what it meant in his Greek Old Testament, 'a unilateral enactment,' in particular 'a will or testament.'" <sup>1</sup>

The editors of the Vocabulary of the Greek Testament also point out the fact that in the papyri and the inscriptions the word means "testament or will" with absolute unanimity and with such frequency that illustration is superfluous. Against this word stands  $\sigma\upsilon\lambda\lambda\alpha\theta\eta\kappa\eta$  which is "to the last the word for 'compact', just as  $\delta\iota\alpha\theta\eta\kappa\eta$  is always and only the word for 'will.' However, in spite of this, they are inclined to differ with Deissmann in his insistence that in the New Testament the word must invariably be translated 'testament.' It is evident, they feel, that the word can hardly be bound to that translation in the Septuagint, and when Paul or the author of Hebrews used the word he would no doubt be conscious of a possible double meaning of the word--both the archaic meaning of the Septuagint and the contemporary meaning. The argument is presented more fully by Moulton and Milligan and this writer is inclined to believe that

1. LAE, p. 337.



the truth lies in their view of it, rather than in that of Deissmann. But we have gained this much from these texts--we now are quite sure that the New Testament writers could not fail to be conscious of the common meaning of the word in their day, and if they do use it in the sense of "compact or covenant" they are also aware of the possibility of a play upon the word, and possibly at times used it with a double meaning.<sup>1</sup>

v. ἀρραβών, an earnest, i.e. money which in purchases is given as a pledge that the full amount will subsequently be paid. The word appears three times in the New Testament.<sup>2</sup> The vernacular usage of this word confirms the New Testament sense of a part given in advance of what will be bestowed fully afterwards. Here is a word, which though correctly defined, could not be properly appreciated without the light which we have received concerning its usage in the vernacular. The non-literary memorials have brought so many vivid illustrations of the sense in which this word was understood by the people of that period that we can feel that they have given us a new insight into its meaning. A few of these illustrations will be given here, in order that when we meet this word in the New Testament we may, by recalling these illustrations, have a new appreciation of what the word meant to those who first read it.

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1. See Heb. 9:15ff.; Gal. 3:15.  
2. II Cor. 1:22; 5:5; Eph. 1:14.



first there is the contract referred to before in this paper<sup>1</sup> in connection with its use of the word *κισθός*. At that time we saw that a certain Thenethkoueis was obliged to carry at the olive-press belonging to Lucius Bellenus Gemellus. But why was she obliged to do this? The sentence before clears this up and also gives us an illustration of the use of *ἀρραβών*. Her obligation arises from the fact that she acknowledges "that she has received from him directly from hand to hand from his house 16 drachmae of silver as unexceptionable earnest-money (*ἀρραβῶνος*)."<sup>2</sup>

In the collection of Greek Papyri in the British Museum, there is a receipt for 160 drachmae, being the residue of the earnest-money (*ἀρραβῶνος*) for a portion of land.<sup>3</sup>

An interesting glimpse into the lighter life of the Fayum (A.D.237) is afforded by a document in which the village council of Bacchias enter into a contract for the services of two dancing girls. The contract states that the girls are to be hired for ten days and states their daily wage as well as other remuneration which they are to receive "by way of payment for the whole period."

"And of this they have received (?) drachmae by way of earnest-money (*ἀρραβῶνος*) to be reckoned by you in the price."

The last illustration<sup>5</sup> which will be given here

1. See p. 71f.

2. Fayum Towns and their Papyri, 91.

3. VGT, Part I, *ἀρραβών*.

4. Milligan, Selections from the Greek Papyri, p. 107ff.

5. It is, however, interesting to note that in modern Greek *ἡ ἀρραβώνα* is used for the engagement ring. (VGT)



comes from Oxyrhynchus. It is a letter of the first century A.D. and concerns the payment of a mouse-catcher and other matters.

"Horus to his esteemed Apion, Greeting. Regarding Lampon the mouse-catcher I paid him for you as earnest-money (*ἀραβίωνα*) 8 drachmae in order that he may catch the mice while they are with young. Please send me the money. I have also lent Dionysius, the chief man of Nemeae, 8 drachmae, and he has not repaid them, to which I call your attention. Goodbye."<sup>1</sup>

vi. *γραφῆς*, a writing, thing written; the Scripture. The word appears fifty-one times in the New Testament. "In the sphere of Divine Revelation the documents belonging to it assume this<sup>2</sup> regulative position, and the *ὑέγραπται* always implies an appeal to the incontestable regulative authority of the dictum quoted."<sup>3</sup> "The New Testament usage of *ἡ γραφή* .....implies the same idea as is stamped upon the usage of the *ὑέγραπται*, viz., a reference to the regulative character of the particular document as a whole, which character gives it a unique position, in virtue of which *ἡ γραφή* is always spoken of as an authority."<sup>4</sup>

Deissmann feels that in this explanation Cremer has not only defined accurately the basis of "New Testament" usage but also that of the general idea that regulative

1. P. Oxy II, 299.

2. Viz., the regulative position which falls to the lot of legal documents.

3. quotation from Cremer in Deissmann, Bible Studies, i. 112.

4. Ibid.





authority belongs to scripture. He has shown that γραφῆ in the Greek world was used to refer to a legal list or document of some sort. The formula of quotation so common in the New Testament, γράφεται, is found also in juristic papyrus documents of the Ptolemaic period and in inscriptions. Further evidence that this thought of the regulative authority of legal documents was present in the early Christian conception of Holy Scripture (γραφῆ) is given when the advocate Tertullian describes the individual portions of the New Testament as instrumenta, i.e., as legally valid documents.<sup>1</sup> The word itself, either as applied to some legal document, or to other writing is exceedingly common in the papyri.

vii. ἄδολος, guileless; unadulterated, pure.

The word occurs only one time in the New Testament and then in the following connection: "As newborn babes, long for the spiritual milk which is without guile (ἄδολον), that ye may grow thereby unto salvation."<sup>2</sup> The word is not met in the LXX, or other Greek versions of the Old Testament, including the Apocrypha. The exact sense of this word has not been clear in the past. It has been thought that the second attribute ἄδολον is not meant to apply to the metaphorical "milk", but only to the word of God as symbolised by it.<sup>3</sup> But its constant occurrence in the papyri in the sense of "pure," "unadulterated," as

1. Deissmann, Bible Studies, p. 114.

2. I Pet. 2:2.

3. Deissmann, Ibid., p. 256.



applied to things like wheat and corn, or even to a liquid like wine, makes it clear that it could quite well be applied to milk. It would also seem to indicate that it is better to translate the word "unadulterated" in the passage in I Peter, than to give it the translation which it has in the American Revised Version.

There is a passage where the word is applied to wine in a contract for the sub-lease of a vineyard in the year A.D. 137. "The said lessees are therefore required to perform all the aforesaid duties blamelessly, leaving nothing undone at the right season, so that no damage may accrue to the vineyard...and they shall pay to the lessor the wine at the vat, new and unadulterated (νέον ἄδολον), each party providing at the vat a sufficient number of jars."<sup>1</sup>

viii. σφραγίζω, to set a seal upon, mark with a seal, to seal. Of the fifteen times that this word appears in the New Testament, eight of those appearances are in the Revelation. The passage which has caused the most difficulty however, is a statement found in the Epistle to the Romans. "When therefore I have accomplished this, and have sealed (σφραγισάμενος) to them this fruit, I will go on by you unto Spain."<sup>2</sup> To speak of sealing fruit does seem to be an unusual expression, but the papyri have made it clear that this is a reference to the custom of sealing

1. P. Oxy IV, 729:18,19. For other illustrations see VGT, Part I, ἄδολος

2. Rom. 15:28.



sacks, whatever their contents might be, in order to assure their safe delivery, so far as the amount placed in the sacks is concerned. "If the fruit is sealed, then everything is in order: the sealing is the last thing that must be done prior to delivery. In the light of this the metaphorical expression used by the Apostle assumes a more definite shape. He will act like a conscientious merchant. We know well that in his labour of love he did not escape base calumnies; a sufficient reason for him that he should perform everything with the greater precision."<sup>1</sup> This conclusion will seem more true to the facts if we see an actual example of this use of the word such as we have in the following second century letter from a woman named Thais to her relative or friend.

"Thais to her own Tigrius, greeting. I wrote Apolinarius to come to Petne for the measuring. Apolinarius will tell you how the deposits and public dues stand: the name will be that which he will tell you himself. If you come, take out six artabae of vegetable-seed, sealing (σφραγίσας) it in the sacks in order that they may be ready, and if you can go up to find out the ass, do so. Sarapodora and Sabinus salute you. Do not sell the young pigs without me. Goodbye."<sup>2</sup>

The above letter is fairly late. In order that we may see that it was a custom known much earlier we have

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1. Deissmann, Bible Studies, p. 239.

2. J. Oxy. vi, 938.



the following letter, dated B.C.265, authorizing the embarkation upon a government transport of a quantity of corn which was due from certain grants of land.

"Xanthus to Euphranor, greeting. Give orders for the delivery through Killes to Horus on the State barge, of which the master and pilot is the said Horus, of the corn levied upon the holding of Alexander and Bromenus and Nicostratus and Pausanias; and let Killes or the ship-master write you a receipt and seal (σφραγισάτω) a sample, and bring them to me. Goodbye."<sup>1</sup> It is obvious that this sample is to be sealed in order to prevent the corn from being tampered with during its transit.<sup>2</sup>

ix. ἀπέχω, to have wholly or in full, to have received. In the nineteen times that the word appears in the New Testament, it sometimes has other meanings than this, but I am interested here in the five times<sup>3</sup> in which the word is used with this sense. Deissmann has shown<sup>4</sup> that the papyri and ostraca are able to give us a better understanding of the force of this word as it is used in these passages. And I am inclined to believe that it explains the use of the word in another passage also.<sup>5</sup> ἀπέχω is used with great frequency in the papyri and ostraca in the technical sense of "I have received"

1. Hibe Papyri, I, 39.

2. Many other illustrations of various uses of the word are given in VGT, Part VII, σφραγίζω.

3. Mt. 6:2, 5, 16; Lk. 6:24; Phil. 4:18.

4. LAE, p. 110ff.; Bible Studies, p. 229.

5. Lk. 14:11. See VGT, Part I, ἀπέχω, for illustration which refers this to Judas and his receipt of the promised money.





in drawing up receipts. This technical ἀπέκω was not only in use in Egypt but elsewhere in the Hellenistic world, and doubtless it was known to every Greek-speaking person down to the lowliest labourer.<sup>1</sup> To the illustrations of this usage given by Deissmann I will here give some additional material by way of evidence.

The first is a contract of B.C. 93 by which Dionysius and his wife Athenais agree to sell 3 artabae of wheat by the dromos measure to Petesuchus, and acknowledge the receipt of the price, 2000 copper drachmae for each artaba, making 1 talent. The receipt is given in the following words: "The aforesaid have sold to Petesuchus son of Marres, Arsinoite, three artabae of wheat at the price of 2000 drachmae of copper for each artaba, the whole price of the three artabae being one talent of copper coin; which sum the aforesaid have received (ἀπέχουσιν) from Petesuchus forthwith from hand to hand out of his house."<sup>2</sup>

There is a rather illiterate deed of divorce, dated A.D.45, in which the husband and wife mutually declare that each renounces all claim on the other, and the wife on her part acknowledges the repayment of her dowry and super-dowry. The receipt is given as follows: "And Tesenouphis acknowledges receipt (ἀπέκω) of the dowry of silver owed by Paous, and the super-dowry..."<sup>3</sup>

1. LAE, p.111.

2. Tebtunis Papyri I, 109:13-18.

3. Milligan, Selections from the Greek Papyri, p.43. The super-dowry (παράδωρα) was what a married woman brought over and above her dower.



There is further evidence of the technical sense of this word in the fact that the substantive ἀποχῆ is used exactly in the sense of our "receipt." One illustration will do, although many more might be given. Here is a letter of A.D.57 which speaks for itself. "Tryphon to his dear friend Ammonas, also called Macer(?), greeting. If you can, please worry Dioscorus and exact from him his bond. If he gives you the money, give him a receipt (ἀποχῆν), and if you find a safe person give him the money to bring to me. My salutations to all your household. Good-bye."<sup>1</sup> When we read the words "they have their reward" in the Sermon on the Mount, in the light of the above illustrations, we see them with a new significance. They now have the more pungent ironical meaning "they can sign the receipt of their reward:" that is, their reward is realised as definitely as though they had signed a receipt for it. They might as well sign the receipt, for they have all the reward they are going to get.

x. *κύριος*, lord. This word occurs (often many times) in every book of the New Testament except Titus and the three Johannine Epistles. Deissmann has much to say<sup>2</sup> concerning "the early establishment of a polemical parallelism between the cult of Christ and the cult of Caesar in the application of the term *κύριος*, 'lord.'" His comments are based upon the revelations concerning the use of

1. P Oxy II, 269, Col.II.

2. LAE, p.349ff.



this word in the non-literary memorials we have been studying. As a result of his study of these texts he makes the statement that "at the time when Christianity originated 'Lord' was a divine predicate intelligible to the whole Eastern world."<sup>1</sup>

The limits of this paper will not permit a full discussion of this interesting subject, for the material bearing on it is abundant and a full study of the word *κύριος* alone would be enough for a paper of this type. The examples of the use of this word as applied to an Emperor become exceedingly abundant in the time of Nero. Inscriptions, ostraca, and papyri abound with references to "Nero the lord." This was the state of affairs at the time of the more important of St. Paul's letters, and Deissmann feels that in Paul's solemn confession of Christ as "the Lord" the early Christians would recognize a protest against the application of this title, with the significance then attached to it, to Caesar. There is evidence to show that Christians went to their death at times, rather than consent to bestow this title which they reserved for "the Lord Jesus" upon an Emperor.<sup>2</sup>

As in the preceding sections of this paper, the ten words here studied can only suggest the possibilities in a more comprehensive study of this subject. These ten

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1. *Ibid.*, p. 350.  
2. *Ibid.*, p. 350.



are but representatives of the large group which are now better understood and appreciated through the revelations of the texts which have formed the basis of this study. Of course the difficult questions of interpretation and definition will not all be solved through the new light which the discovery of the language of the common people has brought, but we now have a new choice of meanings, and a much better understanding of the various interpretations possible to the readers of that day. And of course, new light will break forth as the study of this subject progresses.





## CONCLUSION

As I have tried to summarize the results in closing each section, little need be said by way of conclusion. It is hoped that the rather numerous and lengthy quotations from the papyri have succeeded in bringing more vividly before us the fact that this paper started out to demonstrate: that the New Testament is truly the language of the common people. The glimpses which these letters, contracts and other documents have given us of life in that period of the world's history contemporary or nearly contemporary with the period when our New Testament was in the process of formation, should lead us to feel a keener appreciation of the New Testament itself, as well as to give us a better understanding of the meaning of some of its words.

We now know more about the common problems, joys, and sorrows of the everyday folks living then. And through that knowledge of them, their customs, and their language we may see that when Luther and others translated the New Testament into the language of the people of their day, they were doing just what was done in the first place. That is, they were proclaiming the gospel in a language familiar to the masses. May the New Testament always be

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accessible, in whatever period or land, in a language .  
like that in which it first appeared: a language of the  
common people.



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